

Rotary

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good.

FEBRUARY
2024
ISSUE 668
\$5, Post Approved:
PP242296/0065

ROTARY DISTRICT

9705

Capital of Collaboration

Simply
Irresistible
Meet President-elect
Stephanie Urchick

ShelterBox

Thousands
assisted by
ShelterBox
Morocco
deployment

New Global Water Safety and Drowning Prevention Rotary Club making a splash
+ Partnering for the Environment + Convention for Families: Singapore 2024

Rotary 



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Trek 2024

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Travel package: \$3,205

Subject to change

Land only

 Farmstay based on twin-share



For more information scan the QR code or go to
www.inspiredadventures.com.au/event/interplast-bayoffires-2024

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On September 8, 2023, a powerful 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Morocco, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, and leaving tens of thousands homeless. ShelterBox Australia was on the ground to assist those most in need.

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From programs to protect vulnerable youth and help immigrants, to cultural exchange programs, a men's health van and an environmental envoy program, District 9705 is leading the way in providing joint community, national and international initiatives.

COVER IMAGE: Tank Art at Willan Hill, Wagga Wagga, NSW.



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Publisher – Rotary Down Under Inc
ABN:6211348579 | ACN:001408377

Printer – IVE Group

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Lighting the path out of the dark



R. Gordon
R. McInally
President
Rotary
International

In difficult times like these, it's impossible to avoid feeling heartbroken over the devastation and loss of life caused by war and destruction.

Rotary always stands against harming and displacing civilian populations and using armed aggression instead of pursuing peaceful solutions. We advocate for the observance and respect of international law. We believe in strong action to defend and promote peace, even in the darkest of times.

But we also take our position as an international, non-political, non-religious organisation seriously. To respect the global perspectives and experiences of our members, and to work most effectively in our peacebuilding efforts, we do not choose sides in conflicts.

Rotary is made up of 1.4 million people in communities all over the globe who are united in our commitment to building a peaceful world. We strive to ensure that our words and actions prioritise the health and safety of our

global membership and the communities where we live and serve.

Our members seek to offer humanitarian assistance to those affected by conflict, and our global reach requires that we promote peacebuilding and conflict prevention with cross-cultural, cross-border connections and friendship through Rotary.

For decades, Rotary has harnessed these connections to carry out service projects, support peace fellowships and scholarships, and establish programs like Rotary Peace Centres to help build lasting peace. Our members also take action to promote Positive Peace, addressing the underlying causes of conflict, including poverty, discrimination, ethnic tension, lack of access to education, and unequal distribution of resources.

Rotary members who wish to wage peace can use district grants and Rotary Foundation global grants to support projects with other Rotary members that help refugees and displaced people, provide medical support and more worldwide.

Members can also work with or join peace-focused Rotary Action Groups, Friendship Exchanges, Fellowships, and intercountry committees. And District Designated Funds or district cash can support our peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts.

Members and non-members alike can learn more about peacebuilding through the Rotary Positive Peace Academy, a free online training course available to anyone with an internet connection. You can find it at positivepeace.academy/rotary.

There is no denying that incidents of violence and atrocities being perpetuated around the world seem to be escalating. Global peace is fragile, and the stakes are getting higher.

Still, we know that it is possible to bring all people together to work towards a shared goal. Rotary members do so every day in every part of the world. May our ability to unify in common purpose be a spark that helps light the path out of these dark days.

Together, let's *Create Hope in the World.* ROU



Wheels in motion for the Billy Cart Derby

INCLEMENT weather may have drowned out the 2023 Rotary Club of Claremont Billy Cart Derby in November, but a new date has been set and it's pedal to the metal for the much-loved annual event. The Claremont community is gearing up for some old-fashioned excitement when all the thrills and spills of the derby come to Tasmania.

Inspired by the Red Bull Soapbox Race and the Dampier Billy Cart Derby, and designed to bring the community together, the Rotary Club of Claremont's Billy Cart Derby attracts a large number of racers of all ages keen to test their homemade vehicles on the

track, with great prizes up for grabs across the race categories.

Families, businesses, schools and other teams are busy building and refining their billy carts for the new date. Carts used in the 2022 race are being upgraded from rope steering to steering wheels, to improve safety for the participants.

More than 350 people turned out in 2022 to enjoy a high-speed day of fun, as the Billy Cart Derby continued to build on the success of the inaugural event in 2021.

Organisers hope the 2024 instalment will be even bigger and better thanks to the support of the local

community and help from all the sponsors, who donate their financial support and valuable time.

The third Rotary Club of Claremont Billy Cart Derby will be held at the Claremont College Campus from 10-3pm on Sunday, April 14, 2024. Admission is free for all spectators.

There is plenty to do off the track, with the famous Rotary barbecue, raffles with great prizes, face painting for the kids, a coffee van and ice cream station. Funds raised will be put back into the local community.

For more information visit the event's Facebook page or call 0419 579 739. RDU

Rice Run raises much-needed funds for Cambodian families

TOWARDS the end of 2023, the Rotary Club of Claremont, Tas, once again hosted its lucrative annual fundraising afternoon tea to support local charity Cambodian Rice Run with its efforts to assist impoverished families in Cambodia.

The organisation was founded in 2017 by Marita and Todd Tarrant, who wanted to make a direct impact by delivering 100 bags of rice to at-risk families. Instead, they managed to deliver almost 200 bags in the first year alone.

Tasmanian director Jan Fulton said Cambodian Rice Run is grateful to the Rotary Club of Claremont for hosting events like the afternoon tea, which drew a sizable crowd and raised more than \$7,000.

"The Rotary Club of Claremont has been an

amazing supporter of all our projects for the past four years," Jan said.

"A 30kg bag of rice feeds a Cambodian family for a month and during COVID we were feeding 250 families. Trying to feed so many people during that time was hard but we had some very generous people help us through it."

The Rice Run will soon require a re-brand to reflect the diversity of its support for the people of Cambodia.

"Education is the key to escaping poverty and last year the Rotary Club of Claremont assisted us with purchasing some school uniforms for the kids in Cambodia," Jan said.

"Our other projects vary from building classrooms and providing school lunches, to helping people gain education and grow their own businesses.

"We want to set these people up with the knowledge, skills and equipment they need to become independent and financially support themselves for the rest of their lives".

Article originally posted in the 'Glenorchy Gazette'. RDU



RIGHT: A local mother and her children are one of the many families assisted by the Rotary Club of Claremont's support of local charity Cambodian Rice Run.

BELOW: Club funds have also assisted in the purchase of school uniforms, building classrooms and providing school lunches.



The gift of comfort



SANTA'S sack of simple hygiene gifts for Rotorua women and children in need were delivered in December 2023, thanks to a project run by the Rotary Club of Rotorua Passport.

This is the fourth time the club has run the project, with more than 100 gift packs delivered to Te Wāhi Whakaora Rotorua and District Women's Refuge Manager Julie Gibb to bring a small amount of comfort to those in need.

"Women and children often arrive at the refuge with not much more than what they're wearing," said Project Coordinator Juanita Conder. "Giving those in need a toothbrush, some deodorant, and the means to feel a bit fresher might make a big difference to those in a really tough situation".

Hygiene packs were also

gifted to the Childrens Ward at Rotorua Hospital, to help parents who are arriving at hospital, often with very unwell children, and without much time to prepare.

"We are so privileged to be

able to help out in this small way, and we were also the lucky recipients of a Rotary Foundation district grant, which meant we have been able to supply 200 packs to our community," said Juanita.

Items in the packs include a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, sanitary pads, deodorant, flannel, tissues, moisturiser, lip balm and hair ties. The club also donated hand sanitiser and some items for boys, particularly, who often have unmet needs.

"This project is a fantastic opportunity to give back to our local Rotorua community in a simple but practical and appreciated way," said club President Haley Hodge. "I thank Juanita for spearheading this project for the past four years and ensuring those at the Women's Refuge and parents at our hospital's children's ward have access to items to make them feel comfortable. It's a privilege to provide this support." **RDU**

LEFT: Rotary Club of Rotorua Passport members preparing the hygiene packs.

BELOW: Te Wāhi Whakaora Rotorua and District Women's Refuge Manager Julie Gibbs, left, gratefully receives the hygiene packs from Rotary Club of Rotorua Passport member Mike Keefe and Yvonne Denny.



Stephanie Urchick celebrates the magic of Rotary

By *Etelka Lehoczky*

ROTARY International President-elect Stephanie Urchick has announced the 2024-25 presidential theme as *The Magic of Rotary* and is calling on members to recognise and amplify the organisation's power to save lives.

"Don't misunderstand me – we are not going to end polio or bring peace to the world by waving a wand and saying some funny words," Stephanie told incoming district governors at the Rotary International Assembly on January 8.

"It's up to you. You create the magic with every project completed, every dollar donated, and every new member."

Stephanie urged members to champion Rotary's Action Plan, find a balance between continuity and change, and work for peace. She plans to host a presidential peace conference in 2025 with the theme 'Healing in a Divided World'.

She noted that Rotary has a long history of promoting peace through its network of peace centres. Located at top universities around the globe, the centres have

trained nearly 1,800 peace fellows who are now working in more than 140 countries. The newest centre, located at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul, Turkey, will welcome its first class of fellows in early 2025.

"The Rotary Peace Fellowship began more than 20 years ago to equip peace and development professionals from communities around the world to become effective catalysts for ending and preventing conflict," Stephanie said. "This conference will focus on Rotary's peace efforts and provide opportunities to learn together."

In addition to emphasising peacebuilding, Stephanie reiterated Rotary's commitment to eradicating polio and underscored the necessity of balancing continuity and change, both of which animate Rotary's Action Plan.

"The plan is all about building on our best ideas, not abandoning them," she said. "We face a tough

balancing act. We must change ourselves and stay true to who we are."

She asked the governors to do whatever is needed to make the club experience irresistible to members.

"That might mean changing how things are done in your district. If your district has been doing things one way for 50 years, it's probably time to reassess. If a club in your district isn't active or is losing members, maybe it's time to start a new club that fits better with the community. Just because a club or district hasn't changed in a while doesn't mean no one is hungry for change."

One way to make positive change, Stephanie said, is to embrace the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion within clubs.

"I hope you'll join me in opening your arms to future people of action, even if – and in some cases, especially if – they don't look or act like the typical member of your local club. With DEI, it is easier to be united in a common purpose. It's in those moments when we are committed and focused that we are the most effective and relevant." **RDU**



ABOVE: Rotary International President-elect Stephanie Urchick announced the 2024-25 presidential theme as *The Magic of Rotary* at the International Assembly on January 8.

For an in-depth conversation with RI President-elect Stephanie Urchick, see page 20.



Newest addition to Auckland's public art collection unveiled at Pakuranga Rotary Walkway

COMMISSIONED by Auckland Council Public Art and the Rotary Club of Pakuranga, NZ, Pakuranga's latest public artwork – Ngā Manu by Dion Hitchens – graces the Rotary Walkway at Sanctuary Point in the Bramley Drive Reserve.

Auckland Council public art manager Hayley Wolters said Dion's five-metre stainless-steel kinetic sculpture boasts three large koru/wing forms that swivel in the breeze.

"Ngā Manu references e koekoe te tūi, e ketekete te kākā, e kūkū te kererū, sourced from Dr Hinemoa Elder's book *Aroha*, that translates as the tūi squawks, the kākā chatters, the kererū coos," Hayley said.

"The bird calls can be seen as the birds' identities, different languages for each, yet they work with the forest to help create a better environment. It's also about non-judgement, how we can be like the birds and accept diversity and work together."

When stationary, the artwork has a 3.7-metre span, but when fully extended, that grows to 4.3 metres.

The Rotary Club of



Pakuranga partnered with Council on the work to celebrate Pakuranga Rotary's 2020 50th anniversary, which was not commemorated because of COVID.

Howick Local Board Deputy Chair Bo Burns said it's a stunning addition to the walkway.

"We congratulate Pakuranga Rotary for its unwavering community commitment, particularly on projects of significance like this, to which it committed \$50,000.

"The board has been kept up to date since the artist was selected for the project and we are delighted to welcome his work as a cherished addition to the city's public art collection."

Bo said the brief was a challenging one, creating a piece inspired by the landscape and surrounding environment while encapsulating Rotary's mission to serve the community.

"This special piece elevates our walkway to new heights.

Art has the remarkable ability

to bring joy to people and I look forward to being one of those on my walks with my family."

The Pakuranga Rotary Walkway is a popular walk or bike ride, stretching 9km from Prince Regent Drive in Farm Cove to the Panmure Bridge on a path that weaves past the Pakuranga Sailing Club and offers great views up and down the Tāmaki River.

Dion is of Ngāi Tūhoe and Ngāti Porou, Chinese, English and Scottish descent. His contemporary sculptures function as icons on a landscape, helping to signify the 'unseen'.

"I provide icons for both historical and personal stories, being most interested in the 'unseen' values, experiences and philosophies that inform our relationships to the natural world around us," Dion said.

"I'm interested in how the values from the past can inform our actions for the future, so my work explores the connection between all things (whakapapa)." RDU

ABOVE: Commissioned by Auckland Council Public Art and the Rotary Club of Pakuranga, NZ, Pakuranga's latest public artwork – Ngā Manu by Dion Hitchens – graces the Rotary Walkway at Sanctuary Point in the Bramley Drive Reserve.

March Against Malaria to finish the fight

The 'Finish the Fight Against Malaria' campaign has initiated a new event to raise funds for malaria work in the Western Pacific Region. March Against Malaria (MAM) is for individual clubs to engage with the local community to raise awareness of the need to eliminate malaria.

MALARIA is a global – and personal – disease, as Stephenie Rodriguez can testify.

Stephenie contracted cerebral malaria from mosquito bites on a business trip to Nigeria in 2019. However, she didn't know this at the time. It was two weeks later when she collapsed at Boston Logan International Airport as she was waiting to return to Australia. She was immediately rushed to Boston Hospital in a coma, where the medical staff were unable to diagnose her ailment. It took a doctor friend of Stephenie's from the Sunshine Coast, Qld,

with malarial experience to diagnose cerebral malaria.

Stephenie survived a two-week coma and near-death experience, before commencing a three-year recovery journey to treat irreversible damage to her feet and hands caused by severe sepsis from malaria. In 2021, she became Australia's first bilateral osseointegrated female amputee, losing her feet above the ankles.

Stephenie is passionate about supporting Rotarians Against Malaria and has agreed to be the brand ambassador for the Finish the Fight Against Malaria campaign. She knows firsthand the devastation malaria causes, not only on the human body, but on families, communities and societies where malaria remains prevalent.

Stephenie personifies resilience and articulates the importance of self-love and agency while learning to walk again and live 'bionic'. She is a single mother, a successful entrepreneur, a globally recognised motivational speaker, a past Rotarian and

RIGHT: Stephenie Rodriguez lost both her feet above the ankles to the malaria in 2021. Today, she is the brand ambassador for the 'Finish the Fight Against Malaria' campaign.



TEDx speaker, humanitarian, and most recently a Paralympian in training in the para-fencing discipline.

In 2019, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria approached Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) – Rotarians Against Malaria to partner a campaign to raise US\$12 million for much needed work in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and Vanuatu. Finish the Fight Against Malaria was launched in October 2023 and Past District 9600 Governor Dai Mason was appointed campaign manager. Together with a team of Rotarians across Australia, Dai has been working assiduously to complete the challenge.

The COVID pandemic significantly set back the previous progress that had been made towards malaria elimination. In 2019, a child died from malaria every two minutes, but by 2022 a child was dying nearly every minute. The World Health Organisation’s 2022 report indicated that 640,000 people die of malaria and 214 million are affected by the disease every year. In the Western Pacific Rim cases and deaths are increasing.



The enormous impact this has on the welfare and socio-economic wellbeing of people and countries is staggering. The sad fact is that some 90 per cent of deaths are related to pregnant women and children under the age of five.

Yet, Malaria is a disease that is preventable and curable.

Raising the awareness of the plight of malaria sufferers following COVID was paramount in Dai’s mind. Consequently, he and his team organised the Global Malaria Congress 2023 from May 25-26, just before

the Rotary International Convention in Melbourne. More than 35 international speakers gave their time to present at the congress, which was underwritten by RAWCS. Speakers included Past Governor-General of Australia Sir Peter Cosgrove, Global Fund Chair Lady Roslyn Morauta, Dr Philip Welkoff from The Gates Foundation, Malaria Initiative President Dr David Walton, D9640 Malaria Vaccine Project representative Professor Michael Good, and many more renowned speakers from around the world. **RDU**

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civilians impacted. Although not a Rotarian, Maurice shares Rotary's values and has many Rotarian friends. Maurice connected with some Ukrainian volunteers who had formed the non-government organisation 'New Dawn' to help the forgotten villages with food, electricity, clean water and other basic supplies they had been living without following extensive destruction of their villages.

Maurice returned to Adelaide in October 2022 and reached out to his Rotary friends. With the leadership of District International Services Chair Tim Mee and support from District Governor Paul Thomas, a multi-club committee was formed and a project to support the forgotten villages through New Dawn and Rotary District 2232 (Ukraine) commenced. The committee has representatives from New Dawn, Rotary District 2232, and the Rotary Clubs of Northern Yorke Peninsula, Adelaide, Gawler, Gawler Light, Mount Barker and Morialta.

The first step was to apply for a Rotary Foundation disaster response grant. The initial response was a setback – awarding grants to Ukraine had ended. While disappointing, this did not stop the project.

The second step was to form a RAWCS project. A project launch event was held on February 16, 2023 and the project was promoted through Rotary clubs within the district. Through the reach of RAWCS the project received donations throughout

ABOVE: The devastated 'forgotten Villages' east of Odessa are the focus of work by the New Dawn – Rotary project.

New Dawn Rotary Ukraine Crisis Project

Rotary District 9510 is lending a hand to Ukraine, with the help of friends, fellow Rotary members and The Rotary Foundation.

AT the heart of Rotary is fellowship and service. The Rotary District 9510 New Dawn Ukraine Project demonstrates the power of this in difficult circumstances in villages around Kherson, east of Odesa, Ukraine, that

have been severely impacted by the conflict and remain 'forgotten' by aid agencies.

When Russia invaded Ukraine, South Australian man Maurice O'Connell decided to travel to Ukraine as a volunteer to help



Australia and to date has raised over AU\$120,000.

Then the project received great news – Rotary Foundation disaster response grants were re-opened and the application, which was already in the system, was approved. US\$25,000 to help the forgotten villages was now available. As the original application was for winterisation, the need for which had passed, New Dawn developed new projects to meet current needs on the ground and the new projects were rapidly approved by The Rotary Foundation.

Implementation of the first of these projects – repairing windows in a hospital and a bathroom and shower block in a mental hospital in Odesa – occurred in August 2023.

The project scopes are led by New Dawn as they know what is needed most at any time.

The first project completed with RAWCS funds was a medical centre for a village of 10,000 people that had no access to a medical centre. The location was chosen after consultation with Ukraine Department of Health. The transportable facility was purpose-built in Kyiv and New Dawn managed the project to an extremely high standard. A second medical centre for the same site was delivered in August. Thanks to a significant donation from the Rotary Club of Victor Harbor the third and final element of this medical centre was completed and opened at

the end of December 2023. Projects to refurbish three schools in the area have now commenced. Some children are currently going to school in tents, which is very uncomfortable during a Ukraine winter.

The need in Ukraine is immense but, like the starfish on the beach, this project makes a difference for the Ukrainians in Odesa and the forgotten villages around Kherson.

“It is our intention that this project will continue into the reconstruction phase,” said District 9510 Ukraine project team member Marie-louise Lees. “Not only have we helped with facilities, but we have formed bonds with New Dawn and Rotary District 2232. Rotary in Action.”^{ROU}

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: New Dawn volunteers unloaded the RAWCS-funded medical centre as it arrived on site. The manufacturer included some items of aid in the building. // The second medical centre under construction in Odesa. // District 2232 Past Governor Mykola Steblijancko (third from left), volunteer Maurice O’Connell (centre) and New Dawn founder Julia Pogrebnaya (third from right) at the opening of the first medical centre. // Forty large windows were replaced in Regional Hospital Berezhneuvate using funds from a Rotary Foundation disaster response grant.



If you would like to support the New Dawn Rotary Ukraine Crisis project, donations can be made via donations.rawcs.com.au/58-2022-23. All individual donations are tax deductible.



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ABOVE: Rotarians Cheryl Kitto, left, Frank Ross, Deana Atkins, Norm Kitto and Bruce Wood celebrate the newly installed defibrillator at the Oriental Hotel in Springwood, NSW. (Photo: Tom Walker)

Saving lives in the Blue Mountains

A DEFIBRILLATOR is now available for public use at the historic Oriental Hotel in Springwood, NSW, installed as part of the Rotary Club of Springwood's mission to spread the life-saving devices throughout the Blue Mountains.

The defibrillator, attached to the outside wall of the hotel, can be accessed by ringing a phone number on the box and receiving a code to unlock the lid.

Chris Djekic, a local representative for the Heart180 Defibrillator company, said the goal is to get defibrillators within 180 seconds away from everyone in the Mountains.

"Heart disease is the biggest killer of people in Australia, so we're trying to get that message out there," Chris said.

The new defibrillator was funded by the Rotary Club of Springwood through grants and raffles, and is one of three devices to be installed by the club in the lower Mountains.

Another device is accessible at Springwood Police Station, with the third planned for installation at Winmalee Service Station.

Around 30,000 Australians experience sudden cardiac arrest each year, and quick action can save a life in these situations.

The Rotary Club of Springwood plans to hold training classes for responding to sudden cardiac arrest. For more information or to express interest, email the club at springwoodrotary@gmail.com. RDU



New Global Water Safety and Drowning Prevention Rotary Club making a splash

Founder of the Global Water Safety and Drowning Prevention Rotary Club, Eve Fraser, is on a mission to ensure every child can swim before they finish primary school.

By Amy Fallon

"IT was Plato who said a man is not learned unless he can read, write and swim," says Eve Fraser, the president and founder of the

recently established Global Water Safety and Drowning Prevention (GWSDP) Rotary Club.

"It's really funny, because I chartered the club with the saying 'there is no point in

learning how to read and write if you can't swim and you drown!'"

With more than four decades experience in this crucial area, Brisbane-based Eve is certainly swimming with the greats.

"I never expected to have members wanting to join from the Netherlands and Scotland," she says.

The new club celebrated its first birthday on July 25,



ABOVE: The Namayingo Project Uganda set out to train first responders in the Namayingo District, Uganda, in water safety, rescue procedures, immediate response/first aid and first safety management. The project was developed to strengthen community capacities to prevent and promptly respond to life threatening emergencies involving drowning and fire incidents in, on and around Lake Victoria in the Namayingo District. The training attracted 90 candidates of which 68 were able to complete the training and were certified as community first responders.

2023, which is also UN World Drowning Prevention Day.

Eve's Rotary journey began via the 2018 rescue of 12 boys and their coach from an underwater cave in northern Thailand. She was approached to travel to the southeast Asian country to help tackle hydrophobia, an extreme or irrational fear of water, and why the community wasn't teaching their children to swim.

In Thailand, Eve worked with the Rotary Club of Chiang Mai International, which had received an AusAID grant to train swimming teachers and deliver learn to swim programs to disadvantaged children from local government schools. But she knew that to really make waves she needed more funding, so she decided to join Rotary.

"In Thailand, a country with one of the highest drowning rates per capita,



there was little being done to address the problem," says Eve.

"I understood the structure of Rotary really well, because I've been working with the United Nations for the past 11 years."

In April 2021, the UN General Assembly adopted the first-ever Resolution on drowning prevention, declaring it the top cause of preventable deaths globally.

"I couldn't stop thinking about how many people drown all around the world every year that can be

prevented," says Eve.

In October 2021, she met with then District 9620 Governor Wendy Protheroe. Eve asked why she couldn't get a Rotary district grant to train teachers and teach children to swim. It was well documented that learning to swim is the most effective way to prevent children from drowning. Wendy told Eve to come up with a project and that she would find a way.

Alongside Past District Governor Jitendra Prasad, who chartered the Rotary Club of Brisbane

International, Qld, and sponsored Eve into it, Eve put out feelers about setting up a club dedicated to helping lower drownings around the globe.

Months later, more than 60 people from various Rotary clubs and organisations across the world attended the first meeting of the club.

"I can't even tell you how many countries we had represented that day, it just blew me away," says Eve.

With the added support of Swim Australia CEO Brendon Ward, the Global Water Safety and Drowning Prevention (GWSDP) Rotary Club was born weeks later. Eve was the only Rotarian.

"We had CEOs from some of the top aquatic associations in the world and the hierarchy of swimming across the globe show up," she says. "This meant we could develop quality programs to address the barriers to participation."

To run a cause-based Rotary club, they also needed members who were prepared to 'Serve Above Self' and uphold the Four-Way Test.

The club chartered via the Rotary Club of Alexandra Headland on the Sunshine Coast, Qld. Just a short time later, they trained 60 first responders in Uganda in aquatic rescues, resuscitation and fire management, after receiving their first district grant. The project was run with the Rotary Club of Kampala Ssesse Islands.

In February, a team from the club travelled to Thailand to train 20 teachers and to Phuket, working with the Rotary Club of Chiang Mai. Eve received an award from club past president Professor John Schorr for supporting their mission to improve child safety, health and education in northern Thailand. She later conducted training in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

In September, Eve spoke

at the annual Australian aquatic industry conference SWIMCON23. In December, she took to the stage at the International Lifesaving (ILS) Conference in Perth.

"We've got support from Swim Australia, Swimming Teachers Association UK, Swimming Teachers America, International Federation of Swimming Teachers Association (IFSTA), International Lifesaving Federation (ILS), and many other national and international organisations keen to ensure not one more person drowns unnecessarily."

Eve says that Rotary is the conduit that brings all these parties to the table in a safe and nurturing environment.

"In the most remote corners of the globe we are here to ensure every child can swim before they finish primary school. I believe Rotary is the organisation to help us deliver on our promises." RDU

BELOW & OPPOSITE (INSET): The Triple T Asia Tour 2023 trained learn to swim teachers across Thailand and Cambodia with the Swim Australia Teacher of Swimming & Water Safety qualification. Overall the team of qualified Swim Australia instructors delivered training to 85 participants in Chiang Mai, 49 in Phuket (pictured below) and 54 in Cambodia (pictured opposite and opening image).



Thousands assisted by ShelterBox Morocco deployment

“The earthquake caused many buildings to collapse, and the reconstruction work will take time to complete. Together, we provided shelter to people, giving them a sense of privacy and protection from the cold nights and heat of the day.”

On September 8, 2023, a powerful 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Morocco, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, and leaving tens of thousands homeless. ShelterBox Australia was on the ground to assist those most in need.

ALSTONVILLE Rotarian and ShelterBox Australia CEO Mike Greenslade recently returned from Morocco, where he was part of a ShelterBox Response Team providing emergency shelter to families left

homeless by a 6.8-magnitude earthquake that struck the Atlas Mountains south of Marrakesh on September 8, 2023. Mike deployed with fellow Australian Laura Coleman.

“Laura and I were part

of an international team tasked with providing tents, thermal blankets, kitchen sets and solar lights to hundreds of families affected by the earthquake,” Mike said. “My day job as CEO of ShelterBox Australia is mainly fundraising so it was gratifying to get out in the field again after five years without deploying.

“The response in Morocco was a huge team effort; we worked with Grand Atlas, a local NGO, Rotary and a wonderful group of local volunteers. Logistics were a challenge, given the remoteness of many of the affected communities and the mountainous terrain. Aid was transported in lorries, small trucks, and Utes, with the last miles often covered by loading up mules and donkeys.

“We consulted closely with affected communities, holding focus group discussions before distributions and gave ownership to them via training and involvement in decision making.

“But it was the local volunteers that impressed me the most. They were a fantastic group of young people who had themselves been affected by the earthquake, many of them living in ShelterBox tents. They would turn up in good humour every day and work hard with little need for direction.”

And Mike says the team certainly didn’t go hungry!

“The hospitality shown in these mountain villages was next level; everywhere we went we were given sweet mint tea, accompanied by





freshly made bread, local honey, butter, olive oil and nuts. If it was anywhere near lunchtime, then a roast lemon chicken or a tagine would be brought out for us.

“By the end of the deployment, it felt like we were family.”

For Laura, who was a Rotary Exchange student to Zimbabwe in 1997, her Morocco deployment was the latest in a long list of deployments as a ShelterBox Response Team (SRT) volunteer, including Guatemala in response to a volcano, Ethiopia due to conflict and Paraguay due to flooding.

“Rotary has played an integral part in every one of the responses I have been involved in,” said Laura. “Not only in the fundraising, which is essential for us to be able to do what we do, but also the in-country support of Rotarians, with their local knowledge, contacts and language.

“Although my professional career is in the realm of

marketing and project management, in Morocco I was responsible for managing the ‘last mile logistics’, the transportation and distribution mechanics to ensure the aid got from our Marrakesh warehouse to the hands of the people we were supporting, sometimes very high up in the Atlas Mountains along some quite treacherous roads.”

Naturally, Rotary in Morocco played an essential role in getting ShelterBox aid into the country.

“Rotary in Morocco, District 9010, and ShelterBox worked in partnership with Moroccan authorities and other national NGOs to provide shelter, aid, and other essential items to people affected by the earthquake,” said District 9010 Governor Saadia Aglif.

“The earthquake caused

many buildings to collapse, and the reconstruction work will take time to complete. Together, we provided shelter to people, giving them a sense of privacy and protection from the cold nights and heat of the day.”

In all, ShelterBox assisted over 1,200 families, helping them prepare for a long cold winter before the process of rebuilding can begin.

“Once again, the Rotary network has provided invaluable introductions and connections to the local community, local authorities, and other local organisations,” said Rotary Partnerships Manager for ShelterBox Alex Youlten.

“A huge thank you from me and no doubt all those I've had the privilege to help for the part that Rotary has played in allowing me to do so,” said Laura. ^{RDU}

ABOVE:

ShelterBox Australia CEO Mike Greenslade, left, and ShelterBox Response Team volunteer Laura Coleman deployed to Morocco following the 6.8-magnitude earthquake that struck the Atlas Mountains on September 8, 2023.

OPPOSITE:

In all, ShelterBox assisted over 1,200 families, helping them prepare for a long cold winter before the process of rebuilding can begin.



ShelterBox Australia is a registered charity with DGR 1 tax-deductibility, 100 per cent funded by donations. For more information, visit www.shelterboxaustralia.org.au

Simply

President-elect Stephanie Urchick sees Rotary's Action Plan as key to a vibrant future.



It's late October at One Rotary Centre in Evanston, US, one of those autumn days that feels like summer, a last blast of warmth before the Chicago-area weather abruptly shifts. In less than a week, on Halloween, nearly an inch of snow will fall.

Luckily, Rotary President-elect Stephanie Urchick isn't one to wither in the face of change. Instead, she embraces it. On the bookshelf in her office at Rotary headquarters, among the club directories and banners, the commemorative plates and plaques, and – surprise! – even some real books, there is a wooden sign adorned with multi-coloured leaves that reads, "Fall is proof that change is beautiful".

"It's the same reason I like butterflies," explains Stephanie. "They start out in little cocoons and don't look like much, but then they burst out and become a beautiful creature."



Irresistible

“I truly believe that if Rotary districts and clubs use the Action Plan, we can thrive. It’s a future where there are many more Rotary members involved in service and fellowship.”

Stephanie, who wears an Action Plan pin this day on her black quilted jacket, champions the Rotary plan as a guide for Rotary clubs hoping to undergo a similar metamorphosis.

“I’m all about helping clubs look for ways to change their culture so they become simply irresistible,” she says. “If you look at our worldwide numbers, there’s something like 150,000 people who come into Rotary every year, but there are 160,000 who leave. What that says to me is that some people are not finding value in their club experience. They’re not really leaving Rotary; they’re leaving a Rotary club. We need to get clubs to examine what’s happening.”

A member of the Rotary Club of McMurray, Pennsylvania, Stephanie joined Rotary in 1991 and was quickly drawn to the work of The Rotary Foundation. As a new member, she heard about Rotary’s work to eradicate

polio and became intrigued. She became the Foundation chair for her club and then for her district. Later, at the zone level, she served as a regional Rotary Foundation coordinator, focusing on fund development, and in 2012-14, she was a Rotary Foundation trustee at the international level.

“There are so many great things that Rotary clubs do, and much of it is because they have worked through the Foundation,” she says.

As fall teetered between summer and winter, Stephanie sat down with *Rotary* magazine senior staff writer Diana Schoberg to talk about her past and Rotary’s future.

You’ll be the second woman to serve as president of Rotary. Should we even be making that distinction anymore?

From my perspective, no. It’s about being the best leader for the time. However, I

also recognise that people, especially women, will look to the position of Rotary president, and if they see a woman, they’ll say, “Wow, if that’s somebody who could do it, maybe I could do it too”.

I’ll also be one of only a few Rotary presidents who have been single while in office. Lots of people come up to me and say, “I’m single too, and it’s so great that you’re in the position”. To me, having a spouse does not determine whether you’re qualified for this role. But again, it does mean a lot to people to see someone in this position who looks like them or who has the same life status as they do.

It’s like another element of diversity. Do you think the view of diversity at Rotary has shifted over the past few years?

Diversity has always been one of our core values. But I think the way we’ve measured diversity has definitely changed. Today, it means so much more than it did 40 years ago when we were an all-male organisation. For instance, we now ask people to look at their community and see if their Rotary club mirrors that community. That could mean all kinds of things. It could be age, it could be gender, it could be religion or political affiliation. It could include things like a different perspective, the fact that people think differently. If your club mirrors the community, then you really have a handle on the future. And if it doesn’t, you have an opportunity.



You became a Rotary member in 1991, shortly after women were allowed to join. Why did you join and why did you stay?

Well, I was recently divorced. And when you are married, you tend to do a lot of things together. You go out to dinner together, you go on vacation together, and so on. I suddenly didn't have that. Much like Rotary founder

Paul Harris, I was looking for ways to meet new people. A woman walked into my office and asked me about going to a Rotary club meeting with her. I didn't know anything about Rotary, but when she talked about the service and the internationality, I got interested. So I went, and I ended up joining.

Originally, for me, it was about the fellowship. I wanted to meet new

people. And I did; I met all kinds of people. But I also immediately got involved in service activities. By the fourth meeting, I was doing the newsletter, so I was already doing club service. That club was active in Rotary Youth Exchange and Group Study Exchange and Rotary Foundation grants. It was all amazing to me. So, like most people, it was the service that kept me engaged in Rotary.

Why did you want to become Rotary president — and what makes you the right leader for the organisation right now?

Becoming Rotary's president was never really on my radar screen. I've served Rotary in so many different ways over the 30-plus years I've been a member. A special opportunity that really shaped my thinking was chairing the Strategic Planning Committee. We had the chance to look at the organisation's strengths and weaknesses and reach out to the Rotary and non-Rotary world to get information about what people thought would move us into a thriving future.

Rotary had had the same meeting model for decades. We met four times a month; we rang the bell; we took attendance, etc. Clearly, the world had changed, but we hadn't. We really needed to catch up! Now we have e-clubs and passport clubs and satellite clubs and corporate clubs, all different opportunities for people to come into Rotary and to serve.

I started to look at all of that, and I realised that we are positioned to move into a thriving future. That's what really propelled me to put my name forward. I truly believe that if Rotary districts and clubs use the Action Plan, we can thrive. It's a future where there are many more Rotary members involved in service and fellowship.

What skills from your past professional life will you lean on as president?

I have a background in three different fields. I sang with a band when I was in college and for a few years after that. I had the experience of getting on stage and inspiring people, getting them to dance and have fun. It may sound simple, but it really did develop a set of skills. My second career was in higher education. I worked in college and university settings. For much of that time, I was helping students find careers and jobs. It was both fulfilling and eye-opening. My third career was as a self-employed person at my consulting and business development firm. I did a little bit of training and a whole lot of business development. I don't think there's any skill that we leave behind. They all become part of your package.

What was your band's name?

The Harmoners.

Will there be any Harmoners music playing as you arrive onstage at any events?

No, I don't think so. I hope

they'll be playing Robert Palmer's 'Simply Irresistible'.

You used that phrase earlier: "simply irresistible". Is there a significance to it?

That's what I want Rotary to be: simply irresistible. I'm hoping Rotary and Rotaract clubs will be simply irresistible to community members who have a heart for service and fellowship. They will use the Action Plan to assess where they are and figure out where they need to go. Hopefully, the outcome is clubs that are more attractive and will retain more people.

Every club is different. There's not a cookbook that we can give to clubs and say, "Do this and you're going to be fine". Every club develops its own culture. Country to country, Rotary is done differently. You can have Rotary clubs in the same district that are very different. We need every club to take a moment, do an assessment, and look at the four priorities of the Action Plan. Then they must ask themselves, "Is there something we can do a little differently, or are we already doing the best we can in this or that category?" If you're already irresistible, then stay that way. But we have to attract people to our existing clubs, and we have to start new clubs. That's the way to grow Rotary and to have a future.

What's your theme, and how did you come up with it?

It's simply *The Magic of Rotary*. People can put any verb they want in front of it. *Believe* in the magic of Rotary. *Spread*

the magic of Rotary. *Build on* the magic of Rotary. *Celebrate* the magic of Rotary. There are all kinds of words that we can use.

It came from a visit to the Dominican Republic. We were helping install a water filter in a home where a grandmother, a mother, and three little boys lived. We assembled the water filter and then put dirty water in it so that the family could see that it came out clean. The women learned how to use the filter, and we were getting ready to leave when one of the children grabbed my sleeve and said, "Show me that magic again". That caught me, and I thought: It is magic. We're helping create a change in their lives.

What will be your priorities as president, and why did you choose them?

Advancing the Action Plan to grow membership is at the top of my list. I love this organisation, just like every member of Rotary I meet. I want Rotary to have a future.

My second priority is healing a divided world through Positive Peace. There are several ways to get involved. If everyone would live The Four-Way Test instead of just reciting it, we would have a more peaceful world. I hope clubs will rally around The Four-Way Test and use it in creative ways. And there is the Peace Pole project: Clubs can have Peace Poles erected in their local park, town square, or college campus. The message of peace on the poles is a visible sign to the community that Rotary is a peacebuilding

"That's what I want Rotary to be: simply irresistible. I'm hoping Rotary and Rotaract clubs will be simply irresistible to community members who have a heart for service and fellowship."

“The women learned how to use the filter, and we were getting ready to leave when one of the children grabbed my sleeve and said, ‘Show me that magic again’. That caught me, and I thought: It is magic. We’re helping create a change in their lives.”

organisation. Additionally, Rotary has a Positive Peace Academy, which is an online activity. Any Rotary member or non-Rotary member can take the time to go through that. And our Rotary Peace Centres are powerful activators in changing lives. We’re opening a new peace centre in the Middle East, in Istanbul. In February 2025, we will have a peace conference at that location.

My final priority will be continuity. That means two things: all of us in leadership positions working with our predecessors and those who follow us. It also means looking at the things that clubs have rallied around and things that have taken root. Just because a president leaves office doesn’t mean that you should drop a successful program. What would have happened if Rotary had abandoned its efforts to eradicate polio after Clem Renouf or James Bomar were no longer president?

One of your favorite mantras is “life is more interesting on the other side of yes”. Can you talk about that?

Usually what I tell people is: “Say yes, and then just figure it out.”

“Hey, do you want to be newsletter editor?” “Yes.” “Hey, do you want to be president?” “Yes.” “Hey, do you want to do this?” “Yes.” The only time I say no is if I follow it up with the word “problem”. No problem. Life gives you so many opportunities. Say yes to them. You’ll have time to figure out what to do next. RDU

Partnering for the Environment

BELOW: Rotarians and non-Rotarians came together for a Rotary Day of Action project planting at Centennial Park.

By partnering with a diverse range of organisations and youth groups, the Rotary Club of East Coast Bays, NZ, has added three new service projects to its annual calendar and rejuvenated passion within its members.

FOUR years ago, the Rotary Club of East Coast Bays (RCECB) was looking for some small environment-focused projects to make a difference to local reserves and waterways, keeping

them healthy; clear of weeds and rubbish.

It quickly became apparent that a small group of Rotarians could not do this on their own and should partner with others

to achieve their goal. The club started small, and the following year involved the Tauhinu Sea Scout group. Next, the Greenhithe Ecology Network, then Rangitoto College and the Centennial Bush Society joined the project.

In 2021, then District Governor Grant Smith asked clubs to create a 'Rotary Day of Action'. RCECB took up the call and began planning an annual clean-up event, partnering with Keep NZ Beautiful and aligning



with Clean-Up NZ week in September.

The plan was a low-cost event involving as many non-Rotarians as possible – which meant advertising widely using Facebook, websites and posters. Rotarians would marshal the volunteers, do the setup and breakdown, feed and water the volunteers at the end of each event, and thank them for coming.

COVID limited public involvement but the lifting of restrictions in 2022 gave the club an opportunity to put the plan into action. The key to this was rebuilding links with local schools, Scouts, and ecology groups, and partnering to everyone's benefit. An unexpected



bonus was discovering Rangitoto College was looking for events to fulfil the community service hours curriculum for Year 9 and 10 students – just like the Scouts, Guides and Duke of

Edinburgh candidates who require community service hours.

Now the club has three additional, highly visible, annual service projects, which have recorded

increases since 2021 of 238 per cent in the number of volunteers involved and 270 per cent in volunteer hours.

RCECB has new partnerships with Scout groups, ecology groups, and local community boards and has strengthened its relationship with the local secondary school. Smaller Rotary clubs have joined with RCECB on these projects, along with members from Interact, Rotaract and Rotary Youth Exchange.

For its partner organisations, Rotary provides the opportunities to meet their goals and the club benefits from motivated volunteers, along with successful, completed projects and members with a rejuvenated passion for making a difference. RDU

LEFT: Tauhuni Scouts help Rotary Club of Rarotonga member Stephen Lyon with planting at William Gamble Reserve.

Rotary District 9705



Capital of Collaboration



From programs to protect vulnerable youth and help immigrants, to cultural exchange programs, a men's health van and an environmental envoy program, District 9705 is leading the way in providing joint community, national and international initiatives.

By Anne Matthews, D9560 Passport Rotary Club



Rotary District 9705 was established on July 1, 2020, with the merging of Districts 9700 and 9710. The first district governor of the new District 9705 was the well-known and distinguished Canberran, Dr Michael Moore AM PHD, from the Rotary Club of Canberra, ACT.

Located to the south and southwest of Sydney, the district encompasses the Australian Capital Territory, home of Australia's capital city, and stretches south along the New South Wales east coast from Gerringong to Eden and inland as far as Bathurst, Molong and Parkes, then west to Griffith and Lake Cargelligo. It has 72 Rotary clubs, four Rotaract clubs, three Interact clubs and two EarlyAct clubs,

with seven area governors.

The ACT and its bordering town of Queanbeyan are central to the district, with 19 clubs. Surrounded by the Brindabella Mountains and a short drive to the snowfields, Canberra is affectionally known as the bush capital and has so much more than politicians. It is a planned city with national museums, monuments and galleries, all built around the beautiful Lake Burley Griffin, and named after the city's designer. It is also home to the Australian National University and a plethora of Embassies and High Commissions. Many of these reflect the architecture of their respective countries. It is therefore a multicultural city that celebrates its diversity with festivals and cultural events. And it has some beautiful wineries and breweries.

The coastal strip of District 9705 is known as the South Coast and covers the four geographic regions of the Illawarra Coast, Shoalhaven Coast, Eurobodalla Coast and the Sapphire Coast. It is a lush playground of ocean, river, forest and farmland. You can dive into the ocean in towns like Gerringong, Batemans Bay, Broulee, Narooma, Moruya, Merimbula, Pambula and Eden.

The road trip up and down the Clyde or Brown Mountains or the Macquarie

PREVIOUS PAGE:

Parkes in District 9705 is named after the father of Australian federation and was once best known for its radio telescope that helped broadcast the moon landing in 1969.

BELOW: The district is also home to our national capital, Canberra.



District Governor Andrea Grosvenor

Pass are quite exhilarating. On a cold night the drive back up these mountains, trying to avoid black ice, can be quite terrifying.

During the day, coming up the Clyde, there were always cars pulled over to the side with their radiators boiling. And, of course, there is the famous cave known as Pooh Bears Corner, which has been there for over 40 years. The cave, located on a curving bend of the Clyde Mountain, has an official sign (which was recently given a makeover by Narooma Men's Shed) and is full of teddy bears and honey pots.

The district's Riverina towns of Griffith, Leeton, Coolamon and Wagga Wagga are known as a foodies delight with their wineries, chocolates, fruit and olives. There are some great wineries in Griffith, and it is worth a visit just to sample the acclaimed Noble One Botrytis Semillon.

Bathurst, Parkes, Cowra, Young and Orange, which are in the Central West region of New South Wales, are known for their agricultural production, wineries, rural farmland and natural landscapes. Bathurst, of course, is the home of the Mount Panorama motor racing circuit.

Parkes is named after the father of Australian federation and was once best known for its radio telescope that helped broadcast the moon landing in 1969. The Lachlan Valley Way, which runs through the district, connects many of the larger towns and passes through small towns and villages such as Boorowa, Canowindra, Cudal, Cowra, Gooloogong, Euabalong and Condobolin. RDU

ANDREA joined the Rotary Club of Queanbeyan, NSW, in 2015 and served as president in 2016-17 and 2017-18. Andrea has a long family history with Rotary. Her father was a charter member and president of the Rotary Club of Campbelltown SA, her mother was a stalwart president of Campbelltown Inner Wheel and Andrea was a charter member of Campbelltown Rotaract from 1976 to 1978.

During a 35-year career in the Australian Public Service, Andrea worked in various departments in many different roles, including program development and management, policy coordination and international relations. She is not intimidated by bureaucracy.

Andrea is deeply involved with Rotarians Against Malaria (RAM) and has visited Timor Leste, Solomon Islands and West Timor to develop projects to assist malaria elimination. She is a board member of Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) and is constantly inspired by the fantastic

projects undertaken by Rotarians.

Andrea is also a volunteer usher at the Q Theatre in Queanbeyan, which is a favourite venue for Canberrans as well as locals for concerts, music, comedy, drama and kids entertainment. She also volunteers with Meals on Wheels.

As district governor, Andrea is especially proud of the way D9705 clubs stepped up to the Say NO to Domestic and Family Violence campaign, with marches and events held in many centres across the district in December. This is just the start of a continuing focus on this important issue.

Andrea lives just out of Queanbeyan with her partner Guy and cat Reba. They have two children, Mae and Jim. RDU





Kiva

KIVA is a project of the online Rotary E-Club Serving Humanity. The club falls under District 9705 even though it has members from different locations and backgrounds.

When the club was formed in 2016, all members believed it would benefit them to build a relationship together assisting less fortunate people in countries other than where they lived and worked.

Kiva is an international non-profit organisation founded in 2005 in San Francisco, with a mission to expand financial access to help underserved communities thrive. Kiva seeks to assist the more than 1.7 billion people around the world who do not have access to banks and cannot access financial services.

Kiva helps by crowd funding loans and unlocking capital for the underserved,

improving the quality and cost of financial services, and addressing the underlying barriers to financial access around the world.

Through Kiva's work, students can pay for tuition, women can start businesses, farmers are able to invest in equipment, and families can afford emergency care.

Across the globe, US\$1.99 billion in loans has been funded through Kiva to 4.9 million borrowers in 80 countries.

By lending as little as \$25 via Kiva, members are part of the solution and make a real difference in someone's life. And 100 per cent of every

For more information about Kiva, visit www.kiva.org



dollar lent goes to funding loans.

In total, the e-club has lent US\$945 in 38 separate loans, each of \$25, to recipients in 20 different countries. For example, Juanita from the Philippines received a loan

to build a sanitary toilet for her family. She is aware that by using the sanitary toilet, she is reducing health and hazard risks to her family and neighbours as well as promoting environmental protection. RDU



Inspiring Stories from Africa to Peru



THE Rotary E-Club Serving Humanity has launched its ebook entitled *Imagine Rotary – Inspiring Stories from Africa to Peru* (rotaryclubsservinghumanity.org.au/ebook).

Each chapter has been written by club members themselves, who tell the story of their project and their journey in Rotary. The projects and stories are located in Africa, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Peru, Cambodia, and Port Stephens, NSW.

The book has been put together to inspire current Rotary members who may be thinking of starting a project, and to attract new members by showing how much can be achieved by one or two people with drive, vision and commitment. The book can be read online on any device, or you can download an EPUB version to read using your preferred e-reader app.

The e-club hopes that others will find this a useful tool in membership recruitment. If you would like to find out more about any of the projects or get some advice on how to start your own, please feel free to contact the club via rotaryclubsservinghumanity.org.au. RDU

Gnome painting showcases Rotary cooperation

*By Greg Hooper
Rotary Club of
Murrumbidgee
Canberra, ACT*

“The club sees the project as much more than a fundraising effort. It is an opportunity to showcase Rotary and for Rotarians to engage with the public through a fun activity for children and families.”

THE Rotary Club of Murrumbidgee Canberra has been operating the Floriade Gnome Painting Project for nearly 20 years. It has been a major public relations venture for Rotary as well as a significant fundraiser. Since its inception, the project has grown from painting a few hundred gnomes during the weekends of Floriade to current sales of more than 5,000 gnomes and an on-site Rotary presence at Gnome Knoll for 20 days throughout the four weeks of Floriade. An estimated 300,000 people visit the gnomes display, where they see and speak with Rotarians.

The annual event requires many months of planning and organisation. A new gnome design is chosen each year, a process that commences in March. Designs for terracotta gnomes are then submitted to a manufacturer in China, with samples delivered back to Australia soon after for

approval. Orders are placed in May and after several weeks travelling by ship, two shipping container loads finally arrive in July. It is in these areas of import, transport and storage that corporate partners with the necessary expertise and contacts play an essential role.

Murrumbidgee Canberra members arrange pre-Floriade sales and delivery to pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, clubs, retirement villages, and businesses so that keen painters can apply their artistic talents well before Floriade. Early sales encourage community interest and ensures that Gnome Knoll takes on a colourful display at the commencement of Floriade.

The club sees the project as much more than a fundraising effort. It is an opportunity to showcase Rotary and for Rotarians to engage with the public through a fun activity for children and families. Members also get great satisfaction from the positive feedback they receive from



children and families. Many return year after year to purchase and paint the new design and expand their collection of treasured family gnomes.

Gnome painting is now a popular and sought-out activity at Floriade. Age is no barrier to painting, with participants ranging from two to 96 years of age.

The project also provides an opportunity to meet and work alongside other Rotarians, Rotaract members, Interact members and exchange students. More than 1,500 hours are spent at Gnome Knoll during Floriade. As this is more than Murrumbidgee Canberra members can provide, over the past 15 years the club has sought the help of other Rotary clubs as well



(Photo: Events ACT)

as Rotaract and Interact clubs, schools, and corporate participants. In 2023, seven Rotary clubs, two Rotaract clubs and the Canberra High School Interact Club provided volunteers to fill the roster. The opportunity was also taken to involve Youth Exchange students, who were able to interact with the public and meet other students and Rotarians.

Murrumbidgee Canberra considers the project to be somewhat of a model (though small in scale) for how Rotary clubs can work together on projects to bring about great outcomes for clubs and the community. The engagement of the corporate sector, many of which place considerable emphasis on community service by their employees,

has also been essential in the success of the project and building relationships with Rotary.

The profits from Floriade gnome sales are distributed based on the number of hours each club devotes to the project. At the end of Floriade, Murrumbidgee Canberra hosts a function to celebrate the success of the project, thank participating clubs and corporate participants, and to present cheques. Murrumbidgee Canberra distributes some of its profits to services for the homeless in Canberra, towards the funding of research into childhood cancer, and other community activities within the Canberra region. Other Rotary clubs similarly fund their specific Rotary projects. **RDU**

Support for new aged care employees

THIS project by the Rotary Club of Bega, NSW, had its beginnings when members became aware of the critical need for staff at their local Sapphire Coast Community Aged Care (SCCAC) facilities.

The project aims to support strategies to increase the number of qualified aged care workers, particularly those recruited from overseas on special visas.

This project has now expanded to include the Rotary Clubs of Bega, Merimbula and Pambula. The clubs prepared 18 welcome packages and delivered them to SCCAC. Each package aims to make new overseas employees, who are sourced by SCCAC, feel welcome on their arrival in the Bega Valley and hopefully encourage them to stay working for SCCAC.

The welcome packages include a bunch of fresh flowers, a food hamper, personal requirements such as sunscreen and insect repellent, information about services and attractions in the Bega Valley and an invitation for a tour of the Bega Valley with a host from the 'Adopt a Family' program. The club is very grateful to the local businesses and organisations such as pharmacies and Sapphire Community Pantry, who have made very generous donations to the project.

In addition to the welcome packages, household items such as furniture and kitchen items are also being sourced and delivered to new employees as their rental properties are usually unfurnished. **RDU**





SCARF Illawarra

“By creating connections and generating opportunities, SCARF helps individuals and families establish a sense of belonging, experience social and economic inclusion, and access the tools for self-empowerment and independence.”

SCARF Illawarra is a program supported by the Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise. SCARF helps refugees in Wollongong and the Illawarra build a sense of belonging and navigate the practical and personal challenges of starting a new life in Australia.

The program is organised by the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra.

The council realised that refugees often experienced trauma, significant upheaval, loss and months or years of uncertainty before arrival in Australia.

In their new home, individuals and families face the overwhelming task of rebuilding their lives from scratch in a place where everything – culture, customs, language, physical environment, social norms,

education systems and economic processes – is unfamiliar.

By creating connections and generating opportunities, SCARF helps individuals and families establish a sense of belonging, experience social and economic inclusion, and access the tools for self-empowerment and independence.

The programs provide

responsive, targeted settlement support in the community and are delivered by a dedicated team of more than 150 local volunteers.

Since its establishment in 2005, SCARF has embodied welcome, community, inclusivity and friendship in the Illawarra region. They have supported more than 2,100 people from refugee backgrounds. ^{ROU}



Model United Nations Assembly

ONE of Rotary's most worthwhile youth programs is Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA). MUNA competitions have been held in many Rotary districts around Australia since 1980. For the past 78 years, Rotary has worked alongside the United Nations (UN) to address humanitarian issues around the world. Today, Rotary holds the highest consultative status the UN offers to nongovernment organisations.

The purpose of MUNA is to encourage young people to learn about other nations and to understand and appreciate the workings of the UN. The event provides an excellent setting for students to develop and practise their public speaking skills while debating current world issues. The teams can have two or three members and are usually students from Years 11 and 12.

Each team selects a country, in order of preference, from each of the five blocs (Asia/Pacific, Europe, Middle East, Developing Nations, Western/Other) and the MUNA Registrar allocates the country they are to represent. The teams then research their country's history, politics, economics, peoples, international relations, and policies on current world affairs. Then, at National MUNA, often

wearing the national dress of their country, they debate selected resolutions from their country's point of view.

The debates duplicate actual UN debates. The speeches are usually passionate and lively, the negotiations between bloc countries to influence outcomes are always stimulating and the points of order and motions of dissent generate much interest. Discussions can get quite heated, and participants really do take sides and argue strongly for their position. Bloc walkouts are not uncommon!

The venue of the historic House of Representatives

Chamber of the Old Parliament House, now home to the Museum of Australian Democracy (MOAD), is the ideal location for National MUNA.

Over the years, the organisers of National MUNA, Peter Hill, Garth Britton and the members of the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise, have encapsulated the true meaning of a mentor. They have worked tirelessly to bring together students from around Australia and give them an insight into the way the UN General Assembly operates. Each team also brings along their own councillor to help develop ideas and use as a sounding board.

MUNA is such a rewarding experience for the students because it not only exposes them to other cultures, it also gives them an understanding of the importance of negotiating and working together. RDU

"The purpose of MUNA is to encourage young people to learn about other nations and to understand and appreciate the workings of the UN. The event provides an excellent setting for students to develop and practise their public speaking skills while debating current world issues."



Peace Pole Project



THE Rotary 100 Peace Pole Project was created by the Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin (RCCBG) to recognise 100 years of Rotary in Australia in 2021. Since the project started, 337 Peace Poles have been registered, located in every state and territory.

The Rotary 100 Peace Pole Project had its beginnings following a 2018 visit to the World Peace Bell in Warsaw, Poland, by RCCBG members. They discovered that the coordinator of the Peace Bell was also the coordinator of a project that sees Peace Poles donated to schools and parks around Poland. Soon after this visit, Project Coordinator Michael Rabey received a call from Melbourne Rotarian Hugh Bucknel to discuss ideas for the 2021 centenary of Rotary in Australia.

They set a goal to see if 100 Peace Poles could be donated to 100 schools or parks by 100 Rotary clubs. They have not only exceeded that goal but following

one donation to a South Australian school, the Rotary Club of Adelaide decided to create its own project to see 100 Peace Poles donated to celebrate the centenary of Rotary in South Australia in 2023. The Rotary Club of Adelaide has also exceeded its goal.

On December 6, 2023, the Rotary Club of Drouin, Vic, held a Peace Pole ceremony and installed pole number 327. The six-sided pole, located in Civic Park, has the message 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' in 10 languages – English, Kurnai, Mandarin, German, Dutch, Italian, Afrikaans, French, Japanese and Braille. The principals and 16 students from Saint Ita's and Drouin Primary Schools, as well as a local councillor, 17 Rotarians and other guests, attended the ceremony.

The speech below, given in September 2023 by Principal Jen Allsop, from North Cottesloe Primary School, WA, at the dedication of

Peace Pole number 166, best captures the spirit and ethos of the Peace Pole Project.

"It is with a heart full of gratitude and optimism that we gather here today to celebrate a symbol that transcends borders, languages, and cultures – the Peace Pole. In a world where differences sometimes seem to divide us, this simple yet powerful monument stands as a testament to our shared aspirations for peace, understanding, and unity.

"As we stand before this Peace Pole, we are reminded that the values it represents are timeless and universal. The message 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' is a plea that knows no boundaries, a hope that knows no exclusions. This pole, adorned with those heartfelt words in languages from around the globe, calls upon us to set aside our differences and to join hands in pursuit of a better world.

"In 1955, the founder of the Peace Pole Project envisioned these poles

RIGHT:

Governor-General of Australia the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), left, with Deputy Chief Police Officer Commander Elizabeth McDonald, Chair of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum Chin Wong, and then President of the Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin Eric Carmody unveiled Rotary Peace Pole 100 of 100 in 2021.

Mount Austin Clontarf Academy

as beacons of inspiration, encouraging people everywhere to reflect on their personal commitment to peace. Today, in 2023, his vision lives on, resonating even more profoundly in a world that yearns for compassion, understanding, and healing.

"The languages chosen for this Peace Pole are not mere symbols; they are representatives of the beautiful tapestry of human expression. They remind us that despite the diversity of our languages, cultures, and backgrounds, the fundamental desire for peace unites us all. It is in acknowledging this common ground that we take the first step towards creating a more harmonious future.

"But let us not be complacent in our gathering today. A Peace Pole is not a passive monument; it is an active call to action. It beckons us to look within ourselves and consider how we can each contribute to the creation of a peaceful world. Every interaction, every gesture of kindness, every effort to bridge divides

– these are the building blocks of lasting peace.

"In a time when headlines often highlight discord, let us use this Peace Pole as a catalyst for change. Let it remind us to listen with open hearts, to approach disagreements with empathy, and to work tirelessly for justice and understanding. Let us remember that peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of justice, equality and compassion.

"As we raise our voices together, as diverse as the languages that adorn this pole, let us pledge to carry the message of peace beyond this moment. Let us become ambassadors of unity, champions of empathy, and advocates for a world where the dream of peace is a reality for all.

"In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'You must be the change you want to see in the world'. Let this Peace Pole be a constant reminder that the change begins with us, within our hearts and within our communities. May Peace Prevail on Earth. May we, united and determined, be the ones to make it so." RDU



THE Mount Austin Clontarf Academy is a program that is proudly supported by the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga. The academy was founded in 2014 and aims to improve the education, discipline, life skills, self-esteem and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. The academy currently has 94 boys in Years 7 to 12.

Wagga Wagga club members hold a barbecue breakfast at 8am every Friday for the boys, who have worked up a healthy appetite following an hour of sport. The members also play a game of ping pong or pool with the boys and



admit they are always thoroughly beaten at whatever game is attempted. The barbecue team also cook at the academy's sports events. The students then often help out at the club's annual book fair. RDU

Ruby's House

*By Dr David Marshall AM
Chair, District 9705
Vulnerable Youth Project
Rotary Club of Canberra, ACT*

“Ruby’s acts as a circuit breaker, allowing dysfunctional families to have time apart as tension and other problems emerge.”

I LOOKED into the sunken, bloodshot eyes of a desperate 13-year-old boy and felt helpless. This young lad had been evicted from his family home as they could no longer handle his pubescent behaviour. The despair and anguish he exuded was haunting.

This is the situation faced by thousands of young people across Australia daily.

From this experience, Rotary in District 9705 established a youth program that works with families and their children to stop young people falling into homelessness. The Vulnerable Youth Project (known as Ruby’s) was



designated as a District 9705 project in 2018.

Ruby’s acts as a circuit breaker, allowing dysfunctional families to have time apart as tension

and other problems emerge. Ruby’s is not a refuge, nor a drop-off point for kids already on the street, as other services cater for this cohort.

To enter the Ruby’s program families and their children must both be involved and committed, and the success of this model is backed by 30 years of experience in South Australia. The South Australia program, run by Uniting Communities, sees up to 86 per cent of young people aged 10 to 17 years return to live with their families full-time.

Most referrals to this program come from families, as well as police, education providers, medical professionals and other government service providers.

The homes are owned by the government and



For more information, please contact David via 0418 631 780 or david@train.net.au.

Men's Health Education Rural Van (MHERV)

are modified to have six bedrooms for young people to stay for up to three nights a week, then return to their own homes for four days. This pattern continues for up to six months. Over this period social workers and allied professionals work with the families and these young people to reconcile their issues.

Up to 15 young people can be accommodated in the home weekly. Without this intervention youths often become homeless and slip into a dangerous world of exploitation, drugs, alcohol and intense loneliness. A percentage of these young people will just disappear and sadly some will take their own lives.

Rotary clubs lobby and advocate for the establishment of a Ruby's home or, where certain services already exist in towns and cities now, encourage the Ruby's model to be incorporated into these programs.

In Canberra, the ACT Government refurbished and opened its first Ruby's home in the suburb of Waramanga in September 2022. Many Rotary clubs in NSW are very keen to introduce the Ruby's model into their area to slow the spiralling surge in youth homelessness. Rotary is a perfect supporting partner to advocate for the Ruby's model to be adopted in towns across NSW. The cost to Rotary clubs to support the Ruby's program can be as much or as little as they can provide.

This district project is overseen by a 9705 District Governance Board. **RDU**

MEN'S Health Education Rural Van (MHERV) is a Rotary project founded by Rotary District 9670. The project started in 2008 following the incidence of late presenting, poor health events among rural men. It was decided to try to screen middle aged and older men in NSW rural communities to see if simple tests could identify men's health issues earlier, thereby bringing them to a doctor before otherwise treatable conditions became too serious. They started with an old caravan and at first found that most men were reluctant to be tested.

However, as time and experience began to teach them, the team developed techniques to persuade men to be in it! They discovered that many preferred their tests to be anonymous, so the registration form only asked for their first name and their telephone number.

In 2017, MHERV acquired a purpose-built caravan with two consulting rooms that has toured multiple centres in NSW since August 2017. The only person who is paid is the registered nurse who travels with the van and conducts the tests. However, hundreds of local Rotarians have hosted MHERV visits since its inception.

Each year a planned route is scheduled and the Rotary clubs in the towns along the route support the project locally. The members set up local hotel accommodation and meals for the nurse and provide a laundry service. The local club also liaises with the local council, police



and others for the van's main street or alternative parking in places where rural men gather. Rotarians staff the registration desk outside the caravan and work with the local media to gain publicity prior to the arrival of MHERV.

In May 2023, the Rotary Club of Queanbeyan hosted the van and the accompanying male nurse, Bill (pictured), and his wife Sue, on their visit to Canberra/Queanbeyan.

On the two days of the MHERV visit to Bunnings Majura Park (Canberra Airport) attendance was low due to the slow traffic through Bunnings on those days. Given the low number of people tested on both days, the results were simultaneously gratifying and disturbing, and demonstrated the value of the MHERV service.

There were two patients who needed to go straight to the hospital emergency department due to extremely high blood pressure. These individuals were young, not yet in their 30s, so this was very disturbing. There were also seven patients who needed to see their doctor urgently to follow up their results. **RDU**

Peace Program

BELOW: University of Queensland Peace Fellow Ogunyale A. Olatunde visited Canberra in September 2023 on a study visit, hosted by District 9705.

EACH year, The Rotary Foundation awards up to 100 fellowships to the world's most dedicated and brightest professionals to study at Rotary Peace Centres, located in universities around the world. Through training, study and practice, Rotary Peace Fellows become leaders and agents for peace and conflict resolution.

Ten of the Peace Fellows study for their Master

degree at the Australian Rotary Peace Centre at the University of Queensland. The students are sponsored by a Rotary club in their home country and by a Brisbane district club.

As part of the program, District 9705, through the sponsorship of the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise and working with the Australian Rotary Peace Centre at the University of Queensland

in Brisbane, hosts the current cohort of Rotary Peace fellows on a study visit to Canberra. The visit helps extend the students' understanding of Australia's peace and conflict resolution activity in the region and around the world.

The students are introduced to historical and cultural attractions in the national capital and are assisted in making contacts that will be useful in their future professional life. The program and visit assist the district in promoting this unique and ambitious event. This action-packed program is usually facilitated by Garth Britton from the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise. In 2023, Garth was assisted by fellow club member Bruce Osborn and Hans Bachor from the Rotary Club of Bungendore.

The Peace Fellows visited the Canberra Nara Peace Park where they rang the Rotary Peace Bell, and did a tour of the Museum of Australian Democracy and the Academy of Science.

Over the years, the Canberra visits have been very much appreciated by the Peace Fellows, who are always grateful to the organisers and the home hosts who provide accommodation during their visit.

With the two major wars currently occurring in Ukraine/Russia and Israel/Palestine, it is more important than ever that we work with our Peace Fellows to advance world understanding and provide communities with the necessary skills to resolve conflicts. **RDU**



Assisi Centre for Social Justice and Peace

MANY clubs in District 9705 are financially supporting Assisi Centre for Social Justice and Peace, founded by Ugandan Rotary Peace Fellow Emily Nabakooza.

Emily graduated from the University of Queensland's Rotary Peace Centre in 2019 with a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies. On her return to Kampala, Uganda, she opened Assisi Centre, a youth-centred social change, not-for-profit organisation working at the intersection of gender, justice, social inclusion and non-violent resolution of conflicts in Ugandan schools and communities.

"Our programs provide the most disadvantaged and overlooked children in Uganda a chance to stay in school and learn and consequently create a better future for themselves and the nation at large," said Emily. "We are truly grateful for the many ways Rotary in Australia has supported our mission."

District 9705 has been greatly assisted by two Rotary Foundation district grants to support Emily's vital work in poverty alleviation, sanitation, school food programs, classroom restoration and returning teenage mothers to school following the birth of their babies.

In 2023, the Rotary Club of Balwyn, Vic, made a generous

grant to the Assisi Centre under its Centennial Grant program through RAWCS. The Rotary Clubs of Dalkeith and Northam in Western Australia have also made significant grants to assist with Assisi projects. In 2023, the Rotary Club of Berry in District 9705 funded a water storage tank to provide clean water to the school sanitation block, which had no water running to it.

All club funds and individual Rotarian donations have been used efficiently and swiftly to dramatically improve school sanitation, menstrual hygiene, cooking facilities and to protect, educate and empower school girls at risk of pregnancy to stay in school.

At the request of the Rotary Club of Canberra, ACT, Emily made a



17-minute documentary on the work she has done at Assisi Centre. The video encapsulates the need to empower and lead the next generation of Ugandan peace builders. The video can be viewed at youtu.be/uTL0BBqC3Xg. ^{RDU}

The Assisi project coordinator in Australia is Desmond Woods OAM of the Rotary Club of Canberra. Desmond is available to address Rotary clubs in Australia and is urgently seeking new funding for school toilet block construction, water storage, and classroom repair works in rural Uganda, which are planned for 2024 but not yet funded. Desmond can be contacted via desmond.woods51@hotmail.com or 0427 663 449.

For more information on Assisi Centre for Social Justice and Peace visit acesjp.org

DreamCricket

DREAMCRICKET was initiated by Dr Roly Bigg from the Movement Disorder Foundation in association with the Rotary clubs of the Southern Highlands and The Bradman Foundation. The original aim was to provide an opportunity for primary school students with a disability to develop their fine motor skills and build self-esteem as well as the chance to play on the Bradman Oval and visit the Bradman International Cricket Hall of Fame.

The program has grown to encompass schools and children throughout Australia and internationally. DreamCricket clinics are conducted in schools as part of an experience culminating in a DreamCricket Gala Day on a well-known local oval involving all schools within the area.

Rick McCarthy of The Bradman Foundation and a member of the Rotary Club of Bowral Mittagong, NSW, spread the message across Australia.

For the past 12 years, the three Rotary clubs in Orange, NSW, have participated in the program, with eight schools and over 100 students attending each year it is held.

In Canberra, the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise, ACT, has been running DreamCricket Gala Days and clinics for District 9705 for the past 10 years. The club is also the DreamCricket coordinator for Southeast NSW.

The 2023 Gala Day was held on Main Oval at Canberra Grammar School on November 17. Some 60 primary school students from six local schools enjoyed a day of adaptive cricket in a fun and supportive environment.

The participating schools with their teachers and carers each arrived to a tumultuous welcome with the Grammar Big Band in full swing and a guard of honour provided by junior students from Grammar.

The event was attended by Their Excellencies Governor-General David Hurley and Mrs Hurley and, in opening the event, the Governor-General reminded everyone of our cricketing history and its continuing high profile in our sporting culture. He also mentioned that Australia's One Day International team had overnight qualified for the World Cup final, which received a raucous response.

Following the opening ceremony, the budding young cricketers, each wearing new cricket hats, took to the field with a level of enthusiasm that would have been the envy of any coach. Under the watchful eye of DreamCricket Coordinator George Huitker and his team of assistants, together with some 40 student mentors from Grammar, the games began.

The first two sessions were about giving every participant the opportunity to gain confidence and develop skills, while the final session after lunch involved teams playing against each other with every student participating. His Excellency led from the front both with bat and ball, much to the delight of all attendees.

At the end of the day's play, the tired but happy cricketers were each presented with a medallion by Canberra Meteor and Comets players to commemorate their participation and an icy pole to cool them down.

The Governor-General and Mrs Hurley had a terrific day meeting the students and took the opportunity to thank the volunteers for bringing the day and clinics to life. **RDV**

BELOW:
The 2023 DreamCricket Gala Day was attended by His Excellency Governor-General David Hurley, who joined in the action, much to the delight of all attendees.



Batemans Bay Sunday Markets



THE Rotary Club of Batemans Bay took over the local monthly Batemans Bay Sunday Market in January 2016. The markets, which were held at Corrigans Beach Reserve, Batehaven, had for many years been organised by Batemans Bay High School Parents and Citizens Association.

Around the same time, Marine Rescue Batemans Bay started a second market every month. Up until 2020 the two markets had been an important source of income for both volunteer groups.

In 2020 and 2021, most of the markets were cancelled due to bushfires, COVID and the long run of wet weather. By the end of 2022, both markets had still not recovered, so it was decided to reinvent them with a brand-new logo and a new location.

In December 2022, the Rotary Club of Batemans Bay took on the organisation of both monthly markets and moved them to the beautiful waterfront foreshore precinct in Batemans Bay Township.

The new markets have gone from strength to strength, with stall holder attendance improved by 40 per cent each market.

They are attracting great crowds of shoppers on the first and third Sunday of the month. In addition, the second market each month has doubled the club's income. Local businesses are supportive as the markets are bringing people into town who would not otherwise be there. The local council is also happy because the markets are putting the foreshore precinct to very good use.

The markets have live music, great coffee, and a terrific variety of stalls. From antiques, collectables, clothing, tools and plants to homemade preserves and jams, there is something for everyone.

The club has now moved to an online booking and payment system as more and more time had to be spent on the manual system previously in use. **RDU**

Mobile Kitchen

THE Rotary Clubs of Aurora-Gungahlin, Ginninderra, Belconnen and Hall worked together to raise \$45,000 to supply and fit out a new catering van for the Canberra Police Community Youth Club (PCYC). The Canberra PCYC has been operating in Canberra since 1957. It is renowned for its youth programs, which help reduce youth crime and stop young people entering the justice system.

The PCYC program also enables on-the-job experience for disadvantaged adults and helps them gain qualifications to obtain permanent employment because they are pre-trained staff.

This additional van has allowed this successful social enterprise catering service to travel throughout the ACT region, generating revenue that will enable the project to become self-sustainable; all while giving the homeless a free meal.

PCYC has also partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia to provide long-term, one-to-one mentoring to help change the course of vulnerable young peoples' lives. The PCYC project will register young people in Certificate 4 Hospitality through the Canberra Institute of Technology or another Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The RTO will then provide educational plans and any necessary supervision, in partnership with PCYC.

This PCYC project is an innovative approach to supporting disengaged young people by providing an educational program and vital case management support to ensure each candidate's success. **RDU**





Environmental Envoys Program

By PDG David Brawn
ESRAG Director

IN November 2023, District 9705's Environmental Envoy Outreach Program won an award for communication and engagement in the prestigious Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Contest for New South Wales. Judges commended the extraordinary growth of environmental action by Rotarians since the Envoy Program began in 2021.

In the middle of a global pandemic, a handful of Rotarians launched a program to engage and equip Rotary clubs to implement goals and actions

many had never envisioned before. Within two and a half years, 80 per cent of the district's clubs have put Rotary's newest area of focus into action. Together, clubs have launched 122 environmental projects, completed or underway by June 2023.

Here's how it was done.

The new environmental area of focus

In June 2020, then RI President Mark Maloney announced that the boards of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation had unanimously approved 'Protecting the Environment' as the seventh Rotary

area of focus. This major and very significant development was the result of successful lobbying by the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG). District 9705 committed to implementing this important new direction.

Launching the new area of focus globally

Launching a new area of focus in Rotary is not trivial. It had never been done before and was therefore complicated. The six established areas of focus had been simply created by aggregating similar projects developed over many years. Rotary needed to develop

guidelines covering an array of new eligible goals and projects – such as renewable energy, climate resilience, and biodiversity. The leaders of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation gave themselves just a year to do it before the Foundation began accepting global grant proposals under the environmental area of focus on July 1, 2021.

Launching the new area of focus in District 9705

In 2021, District 9705 had 78 Rotary clubs spread across an area the size of England. The new area of focus was launched in March 2021 at the District 9705 Conference in Bathurst, NSW, by then District Governor Michael Moore, who is passionate about the environment.

Michael appointed me as the district environmental leader.

Many significant challenges faced the launch, but the main concerns were the lack of any significant prior involvement of many clubs in environmental activity, the competition with established club activities, and the fact that there was no existing district environmental leadership in place. The prolonged COVID pandemic didn't help with club communication.

2021 - Getting the Outreach Program established

The first and most crucial launch priority was to recruit experienced and passionate Rotarians to join the District Environment Team. With the assistance of the six area governors in the district, 16 Rotarians

were recruited in mid-2021. They were called district envoys and were asked to support around seven clubs each. Four envoys were certified as ESRAG ambassadors after attending the inaugural ambassador course, organised by ESRAG's Oceania Chapter in late 2021.

The team then developed a team plan in consultation with the area governors and others, and gained approval from the district governor, Leo Farrelly, in September 2021. The initiative was named the 'Environmental Envoy Outreach Program' to recognise the team's focus on personally supporting clubs to embrace environmental action.

The plan recognised the importance of recruiting club environmental representatives (now known as club envoys) and, once again with the support of area governors, the team plan was communicated to presidents at group president meetings via Zoom in late 2021. The presidents were asked to nominate club environmental representatives; most were very supportive. There are now 57 club envoys in the district out of 74 clubs.

2022 - Rolling out the Outreach Program

Following the establishment of the environmental envoy communications infrastructure in 2021, the district team introduced a range of initiatives to support clubs in 2022 at the presidents-elect seminars in March 2022. Apart from ongoing envoy club support, these included:

- A new district environmental Facebook page to support communication around the district.
- The introduction of a District Enviro Club Awards recognition program to encourage environmental action in clubs.
- The introduction of the Rotary Adopt A Tree program (rotaryadopta.tree.org.au) through a partnership with District 9675. This raises funds and arranges tree-planting events. More than 11,000 trees were planted in 2022-23.

2023 - Extending the Outreach Program

In 2023, the Outreach Program was expanded to build upon the successful 2022 program and a new, more proactive outreach strategy with two key elements was announced at the presidents-elect seminars in March.

The team recommended 11 significant environmental projects for consideration by clubs across the six ESRAG theme areas.

Then, two new categories of envoy were recruited to be subject matter experts to support clubs that wanted to implement any of the nominated projects – seven project envoys, who are experienced Rotarians, and four partner envoys assigned by third-party environmental organisations. They initially included Landcare NSW, Birdlife Australia and Keep Australia Beautiful.

The Envoy Outreach Program is considered a

FOLLOWING PAGE: Naiviivi School in Fiji celebrating their new solar installation. The Envoy Partner was Rob Edwards OAM and the It's Time Foundation.

Kicking environmental goals



- Bathurst, where District 9705 launched its environmental program, was named the 2023 overall winner in the Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Tidy Towns competition.
- The D9705 Envoy Outreach Program was awarded Highly Commended in the 'Community and Engagement' category of the Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Award Scheme in 2023. The competition recognises communities that make significant positive improvements in their local environments.
- The Rotary Club of Bungendore won a top award in the Resource Recovery and Waste Minimisation category for their success in securing roofing material to be reused in rebuilding communities devastated by bushfires and hailstorms.
- The Outreach Program raised \$55,000 from 27 Rotary clubs for two Fiji school solar installations



success in the district, with 122 environmental projects being completed or work in progress by the end of June 2023.

2023 - Validation of the Outreach Program

The D9705 Envoy Outreach Program entered a prestigious national environmental awards competition in early 2023 called the 'Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Award Scheme'. The competition recognises communities that make significant positive improvements in their local environments.

Keep Australia Beautiful NSW seeks to "transform behaviour to create a less littered and more environmentally sustainable New South Wales...our programs inspire individuals, organisations, businesses, and government to actively care for their local environment".

I attended the Tidy Towns NSW Awards Weekend in early November 2023, and was pleased to collect a Highly Commended Award in the 'Communications and Engagement' category on behalf of District 9705. The Communication and Engagement Award is for

'programs and projects that inspire environmental action through education, media and community engagement campaigns'.

Formal feedback from the judges included the following positive comments:

"A good initiative that focuses the local volunteer work of Rotary on broad global issues."

"The project is truly inspirational."

"An impactful project delivered through a well-established (Rotary) network."

Change of District Environmental leadership

After two years in the role, I recently stood down as district environmental leader to pursue other interests, including as a director of the ESRAG Board. Dr Stephen Utick, an experienced and well-qualified environmentalist and a previous district envoy, has accepted the district role. I hope the roadmap and experiences I've reported here will help other Rotarians mobilise their district as well

Feel free to reach out to me with questions via david.brawn@esrag.org rdv



Seed Exchange Program

THE Rotary Club of Boorowa's seed exchange program combines two much loved things – community and gardening. Operating from the Boorowa Community Op Shop from Thursday to Saturday, the seed exchange allows community members to access seeds for free.

A selection of seeds are collected, from which residents can select small amounts to take home and plant in exchange for seeds from their own collections. In effect, they are borrowing the seeds.

Seeds can include locally saved seeds, excess purchased seeds, seeds brought home from another region or country, or excess seeds donated by a seed

company. It is anticipated that a portion of the freshly grown seeds will be donated back to the exchange.

The seeds will be stored and made available to others who continue to contribute to the cycle of taking seeds, growing them, and donating a portion back to keep the collection viable, healthy and fresh.

Using a seed exchange is easy and works by the simple philosophy of:

- Take – visit the seed exchange and take the seeds you want to grow;
- Grow – grow the seeds at home and hopefully enjoy a bountiful harvest;
- Save – save some seeds for next year from the healthiest plants and fruits;

- Share – return some saved seeds to the seed exchange for the next person to grow.

Seed quantities are limited, so the taking of seeds is strictly first-come, first-served.

While there, donations can be made to the Boorowa Community Op Shop. To date, Bunnings Hardware in Young has donated over 30 packets of seeds to the exchange.

Donated seeds must include the seed name and variety, the year they were collected, and any notes or special information the grower may need to know. Vegetable, flower, and herb seeds are accepted, and all seeds must be dry and in a sealed bag or envelope. RDU

“A selection of seeds are collected, from which residents can select small amounts to take home and plant in exchange for seeds from their own collections.”

The Wiradjuri-Oceti Sakowi Group Study/ Cultural Exchange

THE Group Study Exchange (GSE) program is a unique, history making cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for business and professional men and women in their initial years of professional life. The chair of the program is PDG Michael Milston from the Rotary Club of Orange Daybreak, NSW.

The program is designed to develop professional and leadership skills among young adults so they can address the needs of their communities and an increasingly global workplace. GSE offers Rotarians the opportunity to participate in sending, receiving, and sharing educational experiences of study teams that will enhance Rotary's worldwide

mission. GSE participants follow an extensive and rigorous program of international travel and team activities.

After COVID delayed the project for three years, Rotary Districts 9705 and 5610 (South Dakota, US) were able to commence a Wiradjuri-Oceti Sakowin Exchange. The Australian team was made up of

Wiradjuri Australians and the US team will comprise First Nations Native American Indians.

The outgoing Wiradjuri team, led by Rotary Club of Orange Daybreak Past President Lynette Bullen, a proud Wiradjuri woman, left Australia on September 9, 2023. The team of four young Wiradjuri professionals – Eddie Whyman (Wagga





Wagga), Micka Newman (Orange), Tenille Dunn (Condobolin) and Ethan Williams (Queanbeyan) – are all from District 9705.

They visited a number of reservations to the east of Sioux Falls, then travelled north-west to the South Dakota capital, Pierre, and then to Rapid City. Each team member was then lodged for a week with a reservation according to their respective vocational interests. They worked alongside local Dakota First Peoples, gaining an understanding of the programs, cultural practices and sharing experiences from their Australian communities.

The incoming team to Australia will consist of Native American Indians from the South Dakota tribes of the Lakota Sioux, selected and supported by Rotary District 5610. The return exchange team is likely to visit in September/October 2024. RDU

Ukrainian Children's Holidays in Poland



THE hardships and anxieties experienced by the children of Ukraine – indeed the whole population – are being addressed in many ways by the international Rotary community.

In a ground-breaking initiative of the Rotary Club of Warsaw, Poland, with financial support from District 9705 and other Rotarians in Australia and Germany, a total of 78 Ukrainian school children and their teachers recently completed two 10-day periods of recreation and learning in Poland.

The visitors were accommodated at Klub Sosnowy (the Pine Club Resort), 10km from Warsaw. The program included indoor and outdoor sports activities, classes in the knowledge of modern society, an introduction to the Latin alphabet, Polish and English phrases and trips to the centre of Warsaw visiting the Old Town, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Copernicus Science Centre and other highlights.

The project was some 12 months in the making, with the first 10-day camp starting on July 23, 2023, the second starting on August 20.

The project's total cost was 21,000 Euros (around AU\$35,000). The Rotary Club of Warsaw made the largest contribution. The Rotary Club

of Canberra Burley Griffin, the Rotary Club of Hall, and several Australian Rotarians together contributed a total of \$9,500 (5,800 Euros). The Rotary Club of Frankfurt also made a significant contribution to the project.

The operator of Klub Sosnowy, Wieslaw Migut, became so personally committed to the project that he funded an increase in the number of participants from the initial 50 to 78.

The first group of 38 children and teachers came from Zaporozhye in the south-eastern war zone of Ukraine, around 1,060km from Warsaw. The second group of 40 participants came from Vinnitsa near Lviv in western Ukraine, around 420km from Warsaw.

The project is another example of the longstanding relationship between Rotary in Poland and Rotary District 9705 in Australia. It was Past District Governor Jack Olsson, a member of the Rotary Club of Canberra, who represented Rotary International in re-establishing Rotary in Poland in the 1990s after it had been banned in many Eastern European countries. Jack was also instrumental in establishing the Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin in 1987 and in furthering Rotary's links between Australia and Poland. RDU



Convention for families

By Eva Remijan-Toba

PICTURE this: You get the chance to treat your family to an unforgettable vacation in one of Asia's top sunny destinations. How? By bringing them along to Singapore for the Rotary International Convention. You'll already have your hotel and flight booked, with a

great base for sightseeing because the venues are close to museums, adventure parks, and activities for all ages. By registering as guests, your loved ones can enjoy the big-name entertainers and inspiring keynote speakers at the May 25-29 convention and join you and the entire Rotary family in *Sharing Hope With the World*.

Enjoy tours in Singapore and nearby countries available through the Host Organisation Committee website, rotarysingapore2024.org. Stay on the island to learn about food, sustainability, or the nation's rich culture. Or hop to Bangkok, for example, to experience the city's famed street life and wander

Inspiration around every corner

IT'S a tale as old as the Rotary International Convention: Two members from different clubs bump into each other, start chatting, and get the spark of an idea for a project.

So don't be shy about starting a conversation with the stranger standing next to you or someone you meet over a meal at the May 25-29 convention in Singapore. After all, two people who talked at a bus stop at the 2016 convention in Seoul went on to plan a project fair in Africa.

Members regularly share stories about chance convention encounters that lead to meaningful projects – the kind that fulfill this year's convention theme: *Sharing Hope With the World*.

They have met while painting a playground during the 2012 convention in Bangkok, lingering after breakout sessions, and, of course, visiting House of Friendship booths. Members relish the chance to meet new friends from other countries to find global grant project ideas, but they also run into potential project partners from their own state, province or district.

After making a convention connection, Rotary members from countries across the world have worked with new partners on countless initiatives, including providing ShelterBoxes to refugees, launching a Rotaract multidistrict information organisation, and recycling millions of plastic bottle caps to raise money to end polio.

A Georgia club's article about a global grant with a club in India to build toilet facilities captures the convention's influence: "This all began at the Atlanta RI Convention in 2017". What seed of an idea will you find in Singapore this spring?

the ruins of the ancient city of Ayutthaya, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

At the Marina Bay Sands complex, which will host breakout sessions, the ArtScience Museum exhibit transforms your drawings into computerised art on an LED-lit canvas of "lush digital jungle" you can walk on.

Adjacent to the National Stadium convention site is a small water park on top of a building with sweeping

skyline views. Splash-N-Surf has a kids playground and an artificial wave pool in a halfpipe structure for prebooked skim-boarding sessions.

- Venture to Singapore's Sentosa resort island (take the cable car!) to explore S.E.A. Aquarium, Universal Studios Singapore with its Jurassic Park zone, or Skyline Luge where you zoom down tree-lined trails on carts. RDU



Are you a poet but don't really know it?

THE Rotary Poet of the Year competition is a fantastic and exciting new competition open to every Rotarian, Rotaractor, Interactor, Rotakid, and friends of.

The competition was launched in December 2023 for presentation of awards in May 2024 at The Rotary International Convention in Singapore, to be hosted by Rotary President Gordon McNally, with Heather McNally (if in attendance) presenting the coveted Rotary Poet of The Year specially commissioned plaque.

There are five categories to choose from, including 'Create Hope in the World'. Winners will be selected by a distinguished panel of judges and prizes awarded either in person or electronically.

Submissions are preferred in English, French, Italian, Spanish and German, however, native languages will be translated for judging.

The competition will raise funds for Rotary supported charities including The Rotary Foundation, plus others selected from around the world.

"Rotary is a diverse and eclectic organisation with 1.4 million members in 190 countries from all walks of life," said competition organiser Rotary Great Britain & Ireland Past President Nan McCreadie. "I hope they will all join this exciting program and I look forward to reading the entries as they come in. This is one for all and I hope everyone shares this fun and exciting opportunity".

For more information, visit www.rotarypoetry.org



Sarita McLean
Public Image
Coordinator,
Zone 8

Managing your social media accounts



By Sarita McLean
Rotary Public Image
Coordinator Zone 8

Managing social media accounts requires strategic planning and an understanding of digital dynamics. Here's a concise guide to navigating the social media landscape effectively.

Understanding platform dynamics

Each social media platform caters to different audience behaviours and content preferences. For instance, LinkedIn focuses on professional networking, Instagram is visually oriented, and Twitter values concise, timely content. Tailoring your approach to each platform's unique environment is crucial

for effective engagement.

Developing a content strategy

Craft a content plan that aligns with both your objectives and your audience's interests. Consistency is key – use scheduling tools to maintain a regular posting rhythm. Ensure your content is engaging, informative, and relevant to your audience. And don't forget about Rotary branding!

Engaging and moderating

Active engagement with your audience builds a sense of community. Respond promptly to comments, participate in discussions, and acknowledge user-generated

content. For larger groups, appoint moderators who understand your brand values to monitor interactions and enforce community guidelines. This helps in maintaining a positive and respectful online environment.

Preventing and addressing issues

Establish clear posting and interaction guidelines to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. In the event of negative feedback or misinformation, address concerns transparently and professionally.

Dealing with platform issues

If your Facebook page faces issues like a shutdown, first review Facebook's policies to understand potential violations. Contact Facebook support for assistance and rectify any breaches. Always have a backup of your content and alternative communication channels like email lists to stay connected with your audience.

By adopting these practices, you can manage your social media accounts more effectively, fostering a robust online presence while mitigating potential issues. Sadie Daugherty, Rotary International's Social Media Senior Specialist will be presenting an online session on these issues at 2pm New Zealand time on Sunday, February 25, 2024. Registration details can be found on www.rotaryzone8.org and on my Facebook page @SaritaMcLean-Rotarian. We look forward to seeing you online. **RDU**

The groundwork for peace



Following the news is challenging these days. Stories of war and violence are deeply discouraging. It breaks my heart when I hear about innocent bystanders, particularly women and children, who are caught in the crossfire of conflict.

Is there anything we can do about it? We certainly can't turn away from the problem. I think in these times, we need to shift our focus from what we can't change to what we can do. We can also support what we know works.

February is Rotary's Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Month. It is one of our areas of focus because peace is central to everything we do in Rotary. Even though most of us aren't diplomats at the negotiating table or peacebuilders working on active conflicts, in Rotary's singular way, what we do works to promote peace and prevent conflict somewhere, every day.

Every Rotary member should remember this during the month of February: When you support any of the areas of focus of The Rotary Foundation, you are contributing to peace. Foundation grants that address fundamental issues – such as a global grant focused on enhancing basic literacy in a community – will cultivate a better understanding of the world and lead to greater economic stability, laying the groundwork for peace.

You can say the same for all the areas of focus, from the environment to economic development. They help stabilise communities, lift families out of poverty, and foster the pursuit of education.

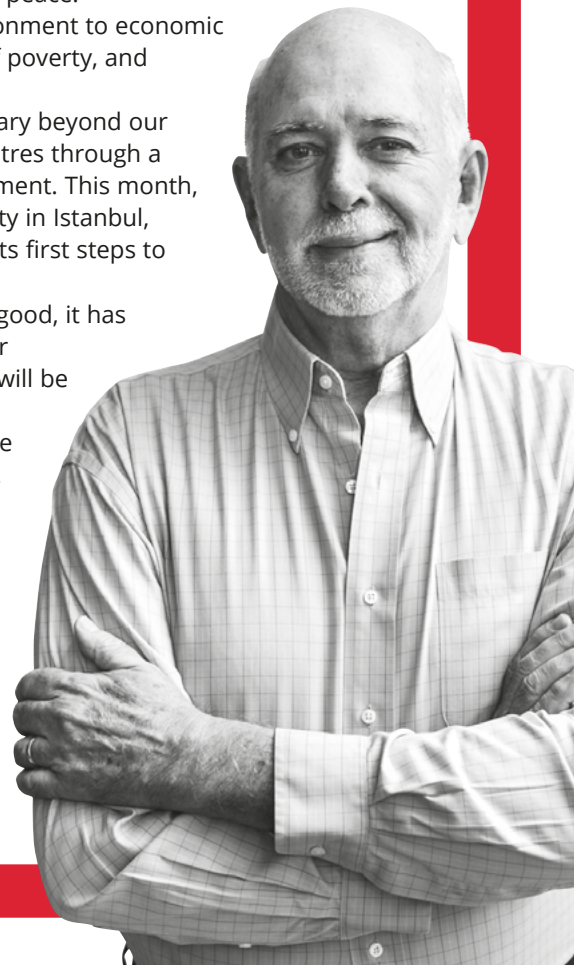
Peace is and always has been interwoven into the fabric of Rotary beyond our projects, too. In 1999, when we established the Rotary Peace Centres through a visionary initiative of our Foundation, we reaffirmed this commitment. This month, we are once again renewing that vision, with Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul, our host partner for the newest Rotary Peace Centre, as it takes its first steps to prepare for the initial cohort of students arriving in early 2025.

All along the way, as Rotary has evolved into a global force for good, it has championed peace and understanding in countless ways, and our Foundation remains the great driving force behind that vision. It will be part of Rotary's eternal legacy.

And by supporting our work, you will be able to say that you are a part of that legacy. You can directly support it by visiting rotary.org/donate and selecting peacebuilding and conflict prevention as the area of focus.

So, yes, there is a lot you can do to support peace and prevent conflict. The next step is up to you.

By PRIP Barry Rassin
Foundation trustee chair





Wildlife of Australia's Great Barrier Reef
Myke Mollard
Woodslane Press
RRP: \$29.99

This non-fiction, hardback book brings kids up close and

personal with hundreds of the creatures found on Australia's Great Barrier Reef: corals, fish, including sharks, turtles and other marine reptiles, whales and dolphins, birds, molluscs and crustaceans. The stunning illustrations and engaging text will captivate children and any adult with a love of Australia's wildlife. Australian author and illustrator Myke Mollard has a passion for educating children about the world around them. His books include



Summer reads from HarperCollins

Win a summer reading book pack featuring *The Milliner of Bendigo* by Darry Fraser, *Sunshine Through the Rain* by Penelope Janu, *Heart of the River* by Cheryl Adnam, *Snowy Mountains Dawn* by Alissa Callen and *The Lawson Legacy* by Janet Gover.



For your chance to win a HarperCollins summer reading book pack, email giveaways@rotarydownunder.com.au with 'HarperCollins summer reading book pack' in the subject line. Please include your contact details, including delivery address.

An A-Z of Australian Bush Creatures (2008),

Australia's Dangerous Bush Creatures (2022), *Australia's Endangered Bush Creatures* (2022), *Australian Dinosaurs and Mega Beasts* (2023) and *Australian Backyard Birds* (2023).



For your chance to win a copy of *Wildlife of Australia's Great Barrier Reef*, email giveaways@rotarydownunder.com.au with 'Wildlife of Australia's Great Barrier Reef' in the subject line. Please include your contact details, including delivery address.

IT'S GOOD... WE'RE GREEN!

DID YOU KNOW THAT ROTARY DOWN UNDER USES SUSTAINABLY SOURCED PAPER AND OUR WRAPPING IS HOME COMPOSTABLE?



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10th October

LIFT THE LID
on mental illness

Rotary
Districts of Australia




www.australianrotaryhealth.org.au

ALL AMERICAN CAR DISPLAY AND MAN CAVE ALLEY

📅 February 18, 2024
📍 Gembrook Recreation Reserve, Vic
🎫 Adults \$10 (Children under 12 years free)
🌐 www.facebook.com/allamericancardisplayandmancavealley

The All American Car Display & Man Cave Alley is one of the premier car shows on the Victorian calendar showcasing everything that's wonderful about American hot rods, custom, classic, veteran, vintage and modern vehicles. Now int it's 28th year, the event is a major fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Emerald & District Inc., held in conjunction with the Thunderbirds Rod & Custom Club Inc. All money raised will be directed to local and international Rotary projects.

ROTARY CLUB OF ORANGE DAYBREAK 12TH HARLEY-DAVIDSON FUNDRAISER

🎫 \$100 per ticket
🌐 www.raffletix.com.au/?ref=w5m7n

The Rotary Club of Orange Daybreak is raffling off a 2023 Harley-Davidson Heritage Classic ST Softail FLHCS 114 Engine, Vivid Black, to raise funds for the Central West Cancer Care Centre, Orange Health Service, supporting clinical trials for prostate cancer. The raffle closes at 10am (AEST) on May 18, 2024. Entry is open to residents of NSW aged 18 years or older.

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Contact us for a FREE program guide Ph: 0444 565 780 or E: orders@pride-of-workmanship.com

ROTARY AT A GLANCE



Rotarians: 1,186,961 in 37,123 clubs in 528 Districts in 221 countries/geographic areas.

Rotaractors: 167,859 in 11,061 clubs in 504 districts in 181 countries/geographic areas.

Interactors: 345,644 in 15,028 clubs in 486 districts in 144 countries/geographic areas.

Rotary Community Corps members: 200,615 in 13,227 clubs in 267 districts in 101 countries/geographic areas.

As at August 31, 2023, there are 22,762 Rotary members in 985 clubs in 15 districts in Australia, and 6,415 Rotary members in 249 clubs in five districts in New Zealand and the Pacific. In addition, there are 723 Rotaract members in 57 clubs in Australia and 297 Rotaract members in 17 clubs in New Zealand and the Pacific. Australian and New Zealand districts include Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, where there are 568 Rotarians in 36 clubs and 224 Rotaractors in 12 clubs.

OBJECT OF ROTARY



The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- 1 The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- 2 High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- 3 The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business and community life;
- 4 The advancement of international understanding, goodwill and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

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The **ROTARY ACTION PLAN**



Is your club looking for ways to create more meaningful service projects?
The Action Plan can help.

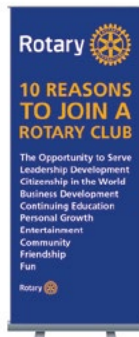


Learn about increasing your club's impact:
rotary.org/actionplan

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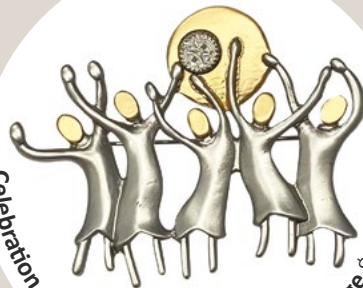
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