

# C O N T A C T

## President's changeover night June 23 2023

Maria Kouppas as chair for the evening gave a very warm welcome to each and everyone attending this memorable event, our celebration of the eighty eight president of RCE, Vera Maljevac.

President Vera likewise wished everyone a good evening welcome the President/ Changeover night., before she offered a special welcome to our guests, District Governor Elect, Ron Payne and Deb Payne, Assistant Governor Tony Laycock and Wendy Laycock, and family members and friends.

President Vera offered congratulations to both Ron and Tony and on behalf of the Rotary Club of Essendon, and she wished them all the best in the coming year.



President Vera acknowledged that we were meeting on the lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. We paid our respect to their Ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging.

She thanked everyone for being here on this special occasion and hoped that we enjoyed the evening.

President Vera thanked Tony De Fazio, Maria Kouppas and the team for planning and organising this event. President Vera also thanked Jill Dalton from Windy Hill for ensuring that everything has been covered so that we can all enjoy a fantastic evening.

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President Vera then gave her final address for her year as President.

Firstly, she declared that it has been an honour and pleasure to have held the role of President at the Rotary Club of Essendon, which I must say has been a learning experience.

She offered a huge thank you to all members, family and friends for supporting the club during the past 12 months. All contributions and input deserve recognition.

Vera extended thanks to her family – Joe, Jake and Jasmine for their support, encouragement and advice during the past year.

President Vera continued, noting that she would like to thank some members individually for their support throughout the year.

Shirley Kukk – Vice President, thank you for your mentoring, coaching, unlimited support and friendship in the lead up to my rotary year and during my term...you have always been there for me. I have gained invaluable experience and knowledge from you since 1977 and of course during my working life at Kangan Institute. You always provided encouragement, inspiration, and many opportunities for which I am grateful, i.e.. assisting in the drafting of my first District Grant a few years ago and several other tasks.

You trusted and believed in my ability to lead the club, but every leader needs good people who are willing to provide support in both good times and during challenging moments. Thanks Shirley for drafting my spiels and editing all those that I sent to you for feedback. You were always ready for a chat and to provide advice when I called you, even when I asked silly questions.

Steve Roe– what can I say ...thank you for your ongoing support and friendship. Your advice and checking in when I needed it was always welcomed. As Secretary, you always have had my back and kept me informed and updated on all the Rotary guidelines, regulations, documents, etc... always a step ahead.

It is never a problem to ask you anything and Steve you are always approachable. You always pointed me in the right direction when there was so much to learn.

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Thank you Steve for drafting the inductions speeches for new members and undertaking all the necessary preparations. Your pleasant manner and sense of humour made a difference. I know that I could call you any time. Thanks for keeping the Board members on track with Agendas, minutes and any other relevant information.

David Abbey, thanks so much for your ongoing support and friendship leading up to the Presidential and year and during the past 12 months. Your encouragement, morale support and advice has been invaluable.

Cathy Nicou – thank you for your support and friendship and it has been a pleasure getting to know you. Thanks for being there for me and always checking in, especially during challenging times. You always had time for a chat and your input and advice is always appreciated. I have always appreciated your willingness to initiate projects in your role as Community Chair and see them through to the end. Your passion to help others is contagious, together with your pleasant and calm nature. You easily connect to people both within our club and externally. You have created and maintained excellent networks with several organisations, such as MVCC, Aphasia group and others.

Sunil Pereira was offered a thank you by President Vera for his support and friendship during the past year and especially your willingness to take on the role of Treasurer again, when you were meant to be on leave of absence, and this was never an issue for you. As someone whose financial skills are quite basic, I was always confident that everything would be carried out accordingly and promptly and I did not have to worry about anything.

Sunil was thanked for listening to President Vera and for providing advice which has been very helpful and assisted in getting through the year. You always knew when to check in and provide solutions.

President Vera thanked Regina Davern for so willingly taking on the role of Deputy Treasurer, which you did without hesitation. Thanks for your ongoing support, friendship and for offering to assist with several other projects, such as the joint club hosting event during the Convention.

President Vera thanked Michael Portelli (incoming President) for his support and friendship. Vera thanked Michael for Thank for his willingness to take on the role of Vocational Chair without hesitation when unexpected things occurred. Michael's pleasant manner and sense of humour always created a great atmosphere.

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President Vera thanked Michael for initiating some great project ideas and having no problems in getting others on Board. Michael is always happy to help when needed and an excellent and inspiring team player.

Maria Kouppas was thanked by President Vera for providing support, advice and checking in to make sure that Vera was doing ok, in updating and informing her of processes and procedures....so many aspects to cover. President Vera noted that she was fortunate to have not just one VP, but two, both of whom provided excellent support throughout the year.

Maria was thanked for taking care of all the work behind the scenes, on the RAAs awarded this year together with Shirley on the Royce and Jean Abbey Scholarship committee, David and Roger, Peter Baker, Past Assistant Governor, Colin Styles and Kunal.

President Vera also thanked Maria for Thanks for keeping track of the welfare of members and families and organising cards and flowers, etc.

Tony de Fazio was thanked for his ongoing support, friendship and getting down to business in his role as International Chair. President Vera thanked Tony for initiating projects with ease and that he provided inspiration and direction for others who willingly came on board. President Vera observed that it was easy to work with Tony and she appreciated the way in which he lead his team. President Vera also thanked Tony for offering to take on the Governance role, together with Steve, Sam and Veronica. These updated guidelines will definitely assist the club in moving forward to ensure that appropriate procedures and processes are followed.

President Vera thanked Andrew Panjkov for his ongoing support and friendship. She noted that Andrew had initiated and lead some great projects as Vocational/ES chair. Andrew's work with the schools, RYLA, scholarship and ES have provided opportunities for many people, particularly the younger cohorts.

Lisa Lowcock was thanked by President Vera for her ongoing support, friendship and the manner in which you happily took on any task as Chair of Club Services. Every time Vera had a request, Lisa actioned it with ease and promptness.

President Vera noted that Lisa always had her back and were there to provide advice and raise her spirits, especially during challenging times. Lisa always ensured that each meeting/event was organised meticulously and every aspect was covered.

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Thanks also for being our representative on at SMS and your involvement, together with others at Days for Girls. Thanks for offering to assist with other projects.

John Odgers was thanked for his support, friendship and ongoing work as Bulletin editor, a vital role for the club. President Vera thanked John for listening to her, and for checking in. Vera has appreciated all the effort with drafting of the club's stories, highlights and photography, etc. at our meetings and events. It is important to showcase our success stories and other information to members, friends and externally. John's sense of humour was very much appreciated - good to have a laugh, even when things don't go to plan.

President Vera observed that it was always a pleasure to work with Peter Condos. Vera thanked Peter for keeping our website updated and in good order with event information, stories, photos and highlights. It makes a difference when our site is professionally set out for the benefit of our members and our external audience.

President Vera also thanked Peter Condos for looking after Clubrunner and providing support to members when required. President Vera valued Peter's pleasant and calm manner and the way in which he just get things done.

President Vera thanked Nola Spicer for her support in chairing the MVAS in partnership with the RCKE. Vera appreciated the volume of time and effort that goes into the planning and organising of this event. Thanks to Nola, her committee and all those members and friends who assisted in making this a successful event. Vera also thanked Nola for offering to assist with other projects, such as the joint club hosting event during the Convention.

Sam Tartaglia was thanked by President Vera for his support and keeping us all well informed and updated on legal matters to ensure that all activities are executed appropriately. Sam's invaluable input and advice on the Governance committee is very much appreciated.

Veronica O'Sullivan was thanked for stepping in to look after Club Services and representation at Board meetings on behalf of Lisa during her absence.

Michael Cariss was thanked by President Vera for stepping in to look after Club Services and representation at Board meetings on behalf of Lisa during her absence.



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Tony Laycock, Assistant Governor was thanked by President Vera for his ongoing support, advice and encouragement throughout the year. Vera noted how Tony assisted her in getting through some challenges, particularly during the earlier months.

## **Award to Jake**

President Vera thanked her son, Jake for his creative and professional design of the event flyers and invites for our club, which I believe have raised the club's profile and always look impressive. Your willingness to help was very much appreciated.

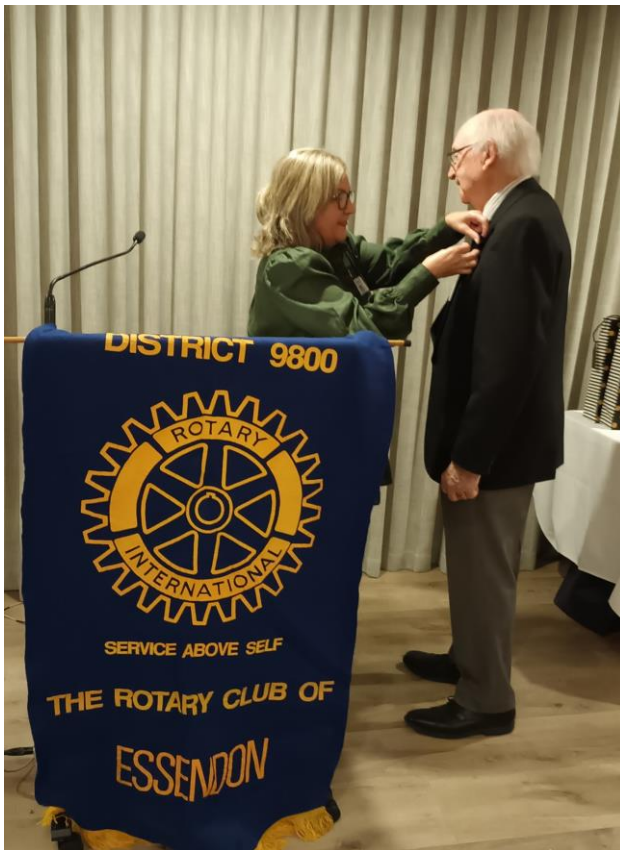


## **Paul Harris Fellowship (Double Sapphire) recognition**

The next agenda item was the awarding of a Paul Harris double sapphire recognition to Alistair Fraser.

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President Vera noted that Alistair has been an active and highly respected member of our club since 2007. He has initiated projects and demonstrated excellent commitment and involvement in club meetings and events.



He is definitely a great team player and often volunteers to assist in other fundraisers, such as the Bunnings bbqs, Art show, etc. Alistair has been a very committed member of Community Committee lending a hand in all projects. Alistair spent many hours planning and organising the Soiree held late last year and it was wonderful to witness his passion in putting together a fundraiser which raised \$5000 towards club funds. He led the organising committee and co-ordination of the event. Alistair even went out on the wettest day in years, battling traffic and floods, to pick up drinks and make sure there was alcohol for everyone to drink on the night.

Alistair is a friendly, approachable Rotarian and is always respectful. Congratulations Alistair on the well deserved PHF (Double Sapphire)

Alistair was surprised by the award. He firstly thanked his wife Patricia for being his ever present and ever patient support and companion. Secondly Alistair thanked the Rotary Club of Essendon and Rotary International for providing him opportunities to serve and contribute.

Maria Kouppas next presented a welfare report. First, Fong Leong will cease his membership for health reasons. Lino Airo Farulla will become a friend of Rotary and attend as many event as possible.

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Maria noted that Steve Roe has completed eight years as secretary of our club, and will generously continue as secretary in our eighty ninth year.

## Happy birthday Sana Halaseh



Sana Halaseh was the recipient of a birthday cake, happy birthday song, and applause. Very generously the birthday cake was shared among all those in attendance, and apparently was quite popular.

## District Governor elect's brief report

District Governor Elect, Ron Payne offered a quick summary of what lies ahead.

He is personally excited by the foreseeable Rotary future. He and his district team have worked hard to make sure that we are all really well prepared.

We need a direction to what we are doing.



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The district team's role is to visibly support clubs, rather than to direct them. The clubs accordingly need to determine their own directions, with guidance from District if required or requested.

We need to tell our stories and broaden the coverage of what and how we contribute to our communities. The 2024 District Conference is in Bendigo from 12 to 14 April 2024. It is one way to communicate our projects and our contributions.

## **Presidential skit**

The script writers this year decided to take a comic lead from last year's Christmas party. The scene was the court of Sir Michael Carissbottom, who was presiding. His nick name was Mick the Merciless. President Vera (Kerry Roe in an elf costume) has been brought before the court to answer two serious charges.

The charges were presented by Prosecutor Michael Plod (Steven Roe in police uniform, including the aviator sun glasses). These charges were firstly the excessive/ offensive noise / sound/ other auditory emissions at the Christmas Party.

The defending attorney, Timothy Anderson (alias Peter Baker) was unsuccessful in his bid for a non guilty verdict.

The second charge was more serious, alleged the prosecutor, as it involved crimes against the ELU (Elf Labour Union). Specifically President Vera was accused of cultural misappropriation in that she wore an elf costume to the Christmas party without gaining the prior approval of the ELU.

Defending lawyer Anderson advised the court that Santa Claus was prepared to negotiate on behalf of ELU and would accept President Vera's apology. Mike the Merciless did not accept this offer and committed President Vera to a second year as President.

With the stroke of a magic wand however the president's skit concluded with a dance with a mixture of partners and characters. That led some in the audience to believe that the court's finding against President Vera would be subject to appeal.

Indeed the next agenda item reinforced that with President Vera asking President elect Michael Portelli to assume the presidency.

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## **Presidential induction speech - Michael Portelli**

President vera invited Michael Portelli to come forward.

Distinguished guests, fellow Rotarians, ladies and gentlemen, President Vera noted that it was an honour to induct Michael Portelli as the 89th President of the Rotary Club of Essendon.

Michael, you have been chosen by your fellow Rotarians to be President of the Rotary Club of Essendon for the year 2023-24 and as such you will be the key officer of our Club, presiding over regular meetings of the club and its Board of Directors. President Vera on behalf of the Board and the Club believed that Michael possesses the qualities of leadership required of this position and know you to hold the esteem and confidence of your fellow members.

President Vera noted that Michael possesses significant knowledge of Rotary International and its programs, and this, along with the considerable effort you have expended in preparing for your Presidential year have ensured that you are well equipped for the task at hand.

We, the members of The Rotary Club of Essendon, pledge to you our support and loyalty during the coming year as together we strive to further The Object of Rotary through the Five Avenues of Service.

President Vera then presented Michael you with:

- his President's pin by which your fellow Rotarians and the public at large will
- recognise you as a Rotary leader
- the Presidential collar of office
- and your dinner badge

President Vera also presented President Michael, for safe keeping, some mementos of our international projects which you can hand to your successor in 12 months time:

- The Kenyan talking stick which guarantees you the final say! and secondly, a very valuable statuette from Myanmar

President Vera hereby declared Michael Portelli, President of the Rotary Club of Essendon – Those in attendance were asked to offer Michael your congratulations.

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Past President Vera congratulated Margarite, on her elevation to the position of First Lady. She knows that know Margarite will be of great support to Michael in his year as President and she sincerely hopes that they both enjoy the experience.

Past President vera invited President Michael to say a few words.

Prwsiden Michael firstly thanked those attending for coming out to participate in the occasion. I t was a great pleasure and honour to have been selected for this role.

President Michael congratulated Vera and the 2022-23 Board for a great year.

Michael on first joining Rotary was impressed by the quality of the guest speakers. He also loved that everyone was treated as equal and with great respect.

President Michael will draw a lot of inspiration from all previous RCE Presidents. He observed that we as a club was built of the values of service, quality, diversity and leadership. Together we can work to create hope in the world.

President Michael looks forward to working with other clubs, the District and local business leaders.



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President Michael notes that Margarite is the backbone of his life and that he could not take on the role of club president without her.

President Michael then presented Vera with her Past President's pin and new dinner badge.

Past President Vera thanked all for attending and hoped everyone had a wonderful night.. She paid particular attention to the 'superstars' for the wonderful skit.

Vera's husband Joe was singled out for special thanks. So too was Tony Laycock for his support, especially in the early months.

PAST President Vera also thanked Maria Kouppas for MCing the evening. On that note the evening was formally closed.

## Upcoming events

- [Presidents agenda 2023/24](#)

Windy Hill

Jul 04, 2023

7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

- [Maintain your healthy body](#)

Windy Hill

Jul 18, 2023

7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

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