

C O N T A C T

Charter Night 21/05/2024

Riverside Golf Club 75 Newsom St, Ascot Vale

Rotary International Theme May 2024. **Youth Service Month**

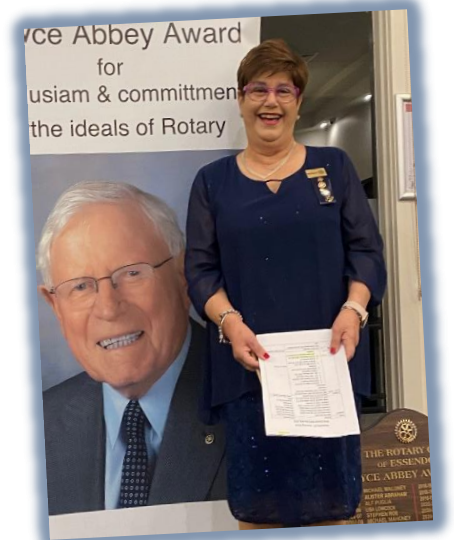
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US! 89 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG.



May 21st 1935 signifies the date our club was officially chartered as the Rotary Club of Essendon. Each year we celebrate our birthday with a party and cake, a guest speaker of note and quite often a presentation or two for some special people. This year we went to Riverside Golf Club which boasts the most beautiful views of the lush greens on the banks of the Maribyrnong River. It was a very busy night full of fun and cheer so read on to see who was surprised with a special mention on the night. Of course we had a birthday cake cut by one of our club elders, Roger Leask and our newest member Mona Malouf.

Maria Kouppas has a great opportunity to have a new career as an MC as she welcomed us all and kept us all in order with her usual charm and wit.

President Michael Portelli welcomed all in attendance and introduced DG Ron Payne to do some very special presentations.



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First up was Stephen Chandler who was presented with a PHF Double Sapphire in recognition of the work he has done since he joined the club in 1990. In the last 34 years Steve has been on all of the club committees and was President in 2014-15. Over that time Steve is one person that has done nearly everything and has been an active contributor since he joined. He is our resident historian, is very generous in his time with the Art Show and has run a very successful steam train day. Congratulations Steve!



Next came Sunil Perera. Sunil joined our club in 2013 and served as president in 2021-22. He has been a very active

member completing 5 years as Contact Editor (a job that does actually take up a lot of time. Ed.) and led a club delegation to Sri Lanka – his home country – while Chair of International Committee. Sunil stepped up to fill the Treasurer role when it became unexpectedly vacant and has done an extraordinary job keeping the club on financial track and putting in an enormous amount of work behind the scenes. Sunil was presented with a PHF Sapphire Recognition. Congratulations Sunil!



Then the person who was actually lost for words (quite a rare occurrence Ed.) as Kerry Roe, partner of our long-standing member Stephen, was presented with a PHF for her long term support of our club in many ways including organising a bus trip to Bendigo for an Art Gallery visit and fundraiser, organising all of the accommodation and events for the club at this year's District Conference in Bendigo and also at the District Conference in Adelaide in 2011. In that same year Kerry also was integral in organising a very successful auction night at Ascot House

when Steve was president of the club. Kerry's assistance to Steve when he was president and now has for nearly 10 yrs club secretary has been largely unseen by most but it is not unrecognised. Congratulations Kerry!

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50 years as Rotarian; What an achievement! Congratulations and thank you to Roger Leask.

Rotarians are people who do make a difference in the world. But sometimes it is being a Rotarian that makes a difference in our own life. We do things that we feel good about. We mix with like minded people; good people, people that care and those people often become our friends because we all care about the same things and we care about each other. It is often said that the more you put in to Rotary the more you get out of it. And some people put in 50 years of their life in to Rotary. That is quite an achievement and deserves significant recognition.

Roger Leask is one such person.

On Charter Night we celebrated Roger and all that he has done in Rotary.

We were first alerted to the celebration, which Roger was totally oblivious of, when in walked his family along with a slightly

different looking Roger played out by Peter Baker.



President Michael Portelli told us a bit about Roger. “Roger was born in Moonee Ponds and live with the Maribyrnong River as his backyard at the bottom of Holmes Road. He was educated at Moonee Ponds State School and then Essendon Technical School. At the age of 16 Roger started and apprenticeship with Airline Motors at Essendon Junction. Roger then spent 6 months in Canada and the USA working for the Ford Motor Company. Roger decided to branch out on his own and started a used car yard in Pascoe Vale South. During this time he went back to night school and studied automatic transmission. He married Gail and they had two sons, Aaron and Jordan.

Once qualified Roger opened General Automatics in Moonee Ponds. The business did well and he opened outlets in Footscray and

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Campbellfield. Roger's love of cars expanded into motor sport where he bought 300 acres in Bacchus marsh and set up a race track for sprint car racing.

Roger was introduced to rotary by norm Mollica who had the Moonee ponds tyre service business across the road from his own business. He joined in 1974 and served as president in 2006-07. Roger's biggest achievement in rotary would have to be starting the Royce Abbey Awards. The awards support the Royce and Jean Vocational Scholarships for humanitarian programmes. This award has become so well regarded that awardees have come from all around Australia as well as numerous overseas. The awards have raised over half a million dollars towards the scholarship programme.

Roger is well respected to not only D9800 but in many other districts as well. He has PHF triple sapphire recognitions. Roger is passionate about Rotary and sees the engagement of membership as the secret to growing Rotary clubs to bigger and stronger entities to service our communities.

On behalf of the Board and members of the Rotary Club of Essendon we congratulate Roger for serving our club for 50 wonderful years."

Roger has been well known for starting every meeting when he was president with "Welcome to the wonderful world of Rotary." He is also well known for his poetry taking every chance to regale us with his ditties. As such many have created poems as a way of recognising and celebrating Roger.

On this occasion it was up to old friend Peter Duras to tell the story of Roger in verse.

"Keen and relentless, these days he'll render you
senseless

With talk of Royce Abbey Awards
Whether sleeping or waking, no rest he'll be taking
As he sells this idea to the hordes.

With tenacity, audacity and unbounded energy
That smacks of a man in his prime
His arguments rational have spread the awards
international
And perhaps inter stellar in time

Energetic and ageless, a lion that's cageless
We've seen 50 years of his best
With a smile on his dial, he's service with style
No wonder we're all so impressed



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He's a strong family man, to Gail and his clan
He's given his love and his loyalty
Ye he's still found the time to give service sublime
Rise Sir Roger, You're Rotary Royalty."

And from Grant Sheldon a poem which celebrated Roger's induction as president of the club in 2006-07 is attached to this email for your reading pleasure.

DG Ron and President Michael presented Roger with a golden 50yr name badge as well as certificates and letters of congratulations.

Well who on earth would want to follow up all of that?
With no member being so game it was left to our guest speaker and he did not fail to keep every single person in attendance absolutely enthralled in his story.

Introducing our guest speaker ex-VicPol and now CEO of Police Legacy, Lex de Man, Maria had him on guard right at the start as she had done some homework and discovered how Lex became a police officer at the delicate age of 18 yrs. And Lex had us laughing in an instant with his story of his first job and Beryl, his supervisor. (No spoiler here just in case you ever get to hear Lex tell it himself. Ed.) Lex also thanked Rotary and all Rotarians as our party was held during the week celebrating volunteers. "The community would not be as well off as we are without people like Roger (Leask) and all Rotarians for what you contribute to our community."



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Lex de Man is CEO of Police Legacy. The organisation was established in 1980 by police members for police members and their families. It is a not for profit charity with 0.5% of police wages as well as donations keeping it operating and helping families of police officers who have passed away. It has a strong relationship with the Rotary Club of Central Melbourne. From the website <https://www.policelegacyvic.org.au/> "The welfare services are tailored to meet our police legacy families' individual needs across all stages of life. A family retreat, children's camp and Christmas party are amongst the activities available to our police legatee families and police legatee children aged 17 years and under. A range of activities allow our 18 - 25 years young adult group to come together, interact and create new and lasting friendships. Local lunches, outdoor hikes and MCG Christmas lunch provide a wonderful opportunity for police legatees to catch up with friends. The organisation offers a range of education grants for police legatee children, young adult police legatees and mature age police legatees. Financial assistance for police legatees is available for will preparation, driving lessons, special occasions and financial hardship."

<https://www.policelegacyvic.org.au/>

Our club gave a donation to the organisation and individuals on the night added to the amount with private donations.

But a little more about Lex. He was instrumental in bringing to justice a criminal who made national and international headlines, in a case that took him and his team across the world.

The police knew it as "Operation Forest" but the public would remember the case of the cult known as "The Family". Led by Anne Hamilton-Byrne, The Family was an organisation that had a web of people ingrained in the cult which facilitated the stealing of babies to be raised by a woman who declared herself as the reincarnation of Jesus. The group began in 1964 when Anne led a religious and philosophical discussion group in the Dandenong Ranges. The group consisted of middle-class professionals, many of whom worked in the field of medicine. By the 1980's it is estimate that Hamilton-Byrnes' fortune was as much as \$50million. Between 1968 and 1975 fourteen infants and young children were acquired by Hamilton-Byrne and raised as her own. However, the children were not adopted via legal means. They were kept in seclusion ad denied almost all access to the outside world. They were subjected to terrible treatment and suffered greatly during and after those years. In 1987 VicPol raided the property and the children were removed from the premises. In a case that led the team to find her and her husband in New York the police eventually built the case against Hamilton-Byrne on a number of charges. Lex finally described Hamilton-Byrne as a most evil woman, that her tentacles reached the highest levels of government. Police who served on the case suffered afterwards as the experiences of what happened to the children were horrific.

All at the even sat in total silence as Lex told us of this case and many commented afterwards that we could have easily listened to him for a lot longer.

We sincerely thank Lex not only for his attendance and talk tonight but also for what he does for Police Legacy.

<https://www.policelegacyvic.org.au/>

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May is Rotary International Youth Service month. It is the perfect time to help out a young person in your life to achieve their dreams.

The Moonee Valley Foundation awards grants to young adults within the Northern and Western regions of Melbourne "... to achieve excellence in education, training, community or other personal endeavours that will ultimately benefit the broader community. The Foundation was formed as Essendon Anniversary Scholarship Trust Fund in 1986. Since then grants have been awarded to outstanding individuals passionate about making a difference in the municipality. The former Essendon City Council initiated the establishment of a trust to provide an annual ongoing award for local young adults. Public donations and council backing established the funds for the Scholarship Trust. Moonee Valley Foundation operates separately from council and is managed by a Board of Directors consisting of local business and professional people on a voluntary basis.

If you know a young person who would benefit from a grant from the Moonee Valley Foundation go to their website for details on how to apply.

MOONEE VALLEY FOUNDATION <https://www.mooneevalleyfoundation.org.au/>

- [club meeting](#) Windy Hill Jun 04, 2024. 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm



Have you ever looked around your house and thought, "how did I end up with all this STUFF!?!???" but the minute you looked at getting rid of it you found it was just all too hard.

Well this is the night for YOU!

Peter Walsh is a renowned international organizing expert. With a wealth of experience and a compassionate approach, Peter has helped countless

individuals reclaim their spaces and transform their lives. As the author of 8 best-selling

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books – including two New York Times best-sellers - and a familiar face on television, including five seasons on the 'The Oprah Winfrey Show,' and currently with his popular Channel 9 series 'Space Invaders', Peter brings practical wisdom and invaluable insights to the journey of decluttering and simplifying.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from one of the foremost authorities on organization and discover how to create a home and life filled with clarity, purpose, and joy.

Join us for an evening of empowerment and transformation with Peter Walsh!" at Windy Hill Bistro @ 7pm Tuesday the 4th of June.

<https://rce.org.au/event/club-meeting-20/>

- **Presidents Night** Hyatt Place Jun 21, 2024. 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm
- <https://rce.org.au/event/presidents-night-4/>

- **Presidents Changeover** Jul 02, 2024



MOONEE VALLEY ART SHOW 2024
Ukrainian Centre, 3-11 Russell Street, Essendon 3040
(opposite Essendon Railway Station)
Saturday 12th October & Sunday 13th October 2024
Gala Opening Night Friday 11th October 2024

The Art Show Committee needs YOU to help secure sponsors for the Art Show. Speak to Christine and Regina to get details of the sponsorship packages to give to potential sponsors when you approach them.

<https://mooneevalleyartshow.com.au/>

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 **KONATIONS** 400 Somerville Road West
Footscray

Experience the magic that is stored within these walls. See the treasure which is donated for use in underprivileged communities, both locally and overseas. Find out how you can volunteer here.

2024 OPEN DAY

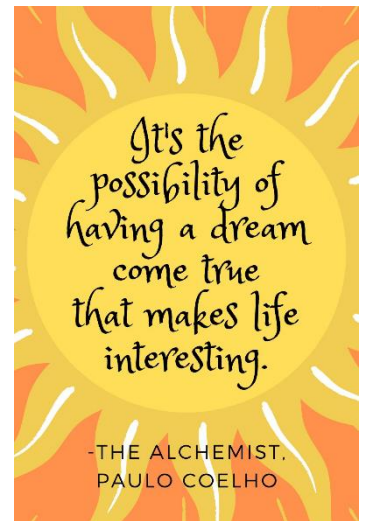
Saturday 10th August
10am to 3pm
Store tours every hour



 Enjoy a range of food, tea & coffee, soft drinks and conversation

We would like to thank our official sponsors;

Interested in being a sponsor?
[Download the website sponsorship guide](#)



 **KONATIONS**

Save the date

2024 OPEN DAY

Saturday 10th August
10am to 3pm
Store tours every hour



 **BOOK FOR CATERING**

Proudly supported by
**Strathmore
Community Bank** Branch

 **Bendigo Bank**

THERE was movement at Essendon, for the word had passed around
That club president Shirley was going away,
She had rejoined Kangan TAFE — and well it was time for Ray to extract
his pound,
So all the cracks had gathered to the fray.
All the tried and noted Rotarians from the committees near and far
Had mustered for the board meeting that night,
For the Rotarians love to serve wherever they are,
And the thought of being the next president was a delight.

There was Duras, who made his pile fixing people up,
The old man with his hair as white as snow;
But few could serve beside him when his blood was fairly up—
He would sell street signs as good as any man could go.
And Royce of the International was even considering putting up his hand,
No better Rotarian had ever had a go;
For never could anyone else possibly be elected if Royce chose to stand,
He's a past World President you know

And one was there, a stripling, a small and weedy beast,
He was something like a jockey oversized,
With a touch of leprechaun—three parts Scottish at least—
And he had a quick wit to be prized.
He was hard and tough and wiry—just the sort that won't say die—
There was courage in his quick impatient tread;
And he bore the badge of Rotary in his bright and fiery eye,
And the proud and lofty carriage of his head.

But still so slight and weedy, one would doubt his power to stay,
And DG Wigley said, "That man will never do
For a long and tiring year—lad, you'd better stop away,
Rotary presidency is far too rough for such as you."
So he waited sad and wistful—only Royce stood his friend —
"I think we ought to let him lead" he said;
"I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end,
For both Gail and he are stoutly bred.

"He hails from Strathmore, Upland Road is his home,
Where the Moonee Ponds creek runs those giant hills between;
I have seen full many Rotarians since I first commenced to roam,
But nowhere yet such a man have I seen."

So his first meeting came — the members wandered up
They raced away towards Frederick's bar,
And Roger gave his orders, 'Sergeant Murphy, go at them from the jump,
No use being nice, politeness won't get you far.

And, Murph, you must wheel them, try and wheel them to the right.
Push them away from the bar, and never fear the spills,
For never yet was there a sergeant who could keep the mob in sight,
If once they start drinking a red from the Adelaide hills.'

But it was 1.05pm and still the meeting hadn't gotten underway
No grace. No toast. The microphone still not tried
And pp Shirley muttered fiercely, "We may bid the mob good day,
Something has to be done to get this meeting into stride."

But the man from Strathmore didn't let it go to his head,
And he swung his arms around and gave a cheer,
And he raced to the Microphone like a torrent down its bed,
While the others stood and watched in very fear.

He rang the bell wildly and got the members to move their feet,
He cleared the bar and took it in his stride,
And the man from Strathmore got them all into their seat—
It was grand to see our new president reside.

And up at Rotary International, where the air is so refined
They talk fondly of Essendon, home of Royce esquire
But first a female president and now Roger has been signed
Me thinks I heard them say something about "frying pan into the fire"

