

C O N T A C T

Club meeting Tuesday 3RD February 2026
Windy Hill Venue, Cnr Napier & Brewster St, Essendon 3040



Peacebuilding and conflict prevention are at the heart of what we as Rotarians strive to achieve in our world. Without peace it is almost impossible to achieve anything positive in our lives. While we can aim for a peaceful world it is hard to make it a reality. It takes patience, active listening and presence, empathy and understanding, respect, skilful training and a real willingness to achieve to create a place of peace in ourselves and our community.

There are many ways you can engage in creating peace and preventing conflict in your life. There are some ideas and resources on the later pages of this newsletter.



And Rotary International provides amazing programmes for those who strive to help the wider world be a more peaceful place for the millions of people who live in places where there is active and ongoing conflict. Rotary awards up to 170 funded fellowships a year for dedicated leaders from around the world to study at one of our eight peace centres.

Go to <https://www.rotary.org/en/our-programs/peace-fellowships> to learn more about the Peace Fellowships available.

Our first meeting of 2026 saw a few changes from where we left off in 2025. We have our new president, Denis Kosnar, standing up and welcoming us for the first time since the resignation of Regina Davern.

Denis was president elect for 2026-27 but has graciously taken on the job six months earlier than planned. Tony DeFazio and Sam Tartaglia are his vice-presidents and mentors to help him navigate the top job.

And of course, Denis has his wonderful wife Maxine right by his side.

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Calabrian Dinner Night

What do you call a group of people who relished amazing authentic Italian cuisine, who got up and danced until their feet were sore to classic Italian music and who enjoyed the fabulous fellowship of friends and family on a warm summer night? You call them US!

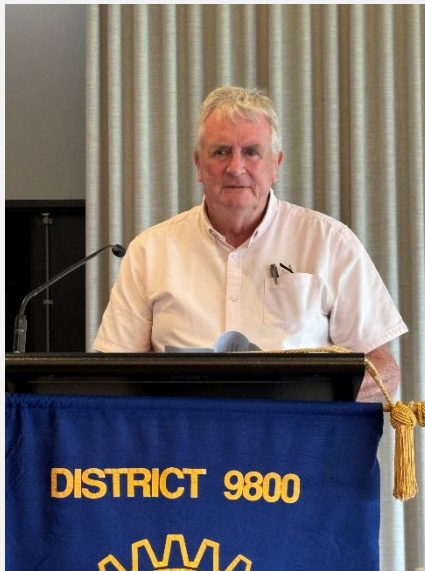
More than 60 Essendon Rotarians, family and friends attended the Reggio Calabria Club in Brunswick last Saturday and had an absolute ball. The amount and quality of food was outstanding as was the atmosphere in our part of the very busy room. We all caught up after our traditional summer break and shared wonderful stories of family Christmas celebrations, holidays and relaxation.

The joy, fun and laughter was just what we all needed. See some happy snaps in the following pages.

BIG Thanks to Tony DeFazio for organising what we all hope will be a regular event for the club.

Just let our swollen feet settle a bit before we need to put on our dancing shoes again please!

Kevin Nolan



Our first meeting of the year was well attended by many Essendon and Keilor Rotarians as our guest speaker was Kevin Nolan who is the current president of Keilor Rotary.

Kevin spoke to us about his life and work in the electronic security business. Kevin was always interested in sound systems as a child. He tinkered and investigated and it led him to study and begin his working life with STC P/L before starting his own business NIVEK Sound and Security Systems P/L. (yes, it is Kevin spelled backwards)

Kevin has specialised in security systems for many years now and has seen the industry grow and change. Starting with purely sound systems the industry moved on to CCTV and monitored security systems.

So what path is the security sector now taking?

There are many and varied DIY systems on the market and Kevin showed us one that he is currently trialling with great success. It is an independent system mounted on a tree. The images are impressive and it is perfect for

the home setting.

Here have been huge improvements in the CCTV systems and in many cases, are cheaper than one could get for the same type of system 10 years ago. Monitored alarm systems send information to a central base when certain alarms are triggered which then alert the home or business owner to attend and check out the situation. The big push now is for VAS – verified alarm systems - which record a ten second video which is then sent to a central control room once an alarm is triggered. Police will more likely respond when they can actually see that it is not a false alarm. It was a fascinating and informative talk.

Many thanks to Kevin for speaking and to all of the Keilor Rotarians who visited. Please come again soon.

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The Great Essendon Rotary Duck Race 2026



You are all aware of the wonderfully successful Duck Race of 2025. And you have all helped to give all of our little plastic duckies two wonderful spa treatment days where they were cleaned and buffed.

Last Sunday saw another great turn out for the next step in preparing our little friends for their big outing on the 1st March 2026.

Ducks were tagged with their numbers to race, boxed up in groups of 100, and noodles were threaded and secured to work as lane ropes on the river to ensure that no little

rogues go floating off into the wilds of the Maribyrnong river. It was a big morning but having lovely weather and great company made it a very pleasant time – even if our feet were still recovering from all of the dancing at the Calabrian Club the night before.

Without the help of all of these members, and many of their partners, we could not have had such a productive day.

The second working bee is planned for this Sunday at 9am at the Duck Cave. We need your help so come along if you can. As the electrician was heard to say – “Many hands make light work!”

The official flyer has been sent to all members to utilise in spreading the word about the race. The booking site is now live and duck tickets can be purchased for \$12 each.



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St Therese's school is supporting the race by promoting through their school and as thanks from us they will receive a portion of the tickets sold to use to support their students. Many local organisations are partnering with us and we thank them – the Essendon Rowing Club, the SES, Essendon Canoe Club, Hobsons Bay Band to name a few who will help on the day.

Please support all of our generous sponsors and use their businesses when you can.

- Essendon Fields is providing the first prize \$2000.00 voucher, <https://ef.com.au/>
- Doors, Blinds and Shutters (Brenton Cooper) <https://quote.doorsblindsandshutters.com.au/free-quote> is providing second prize \$750.00 voucher and
- MGM Home Timber and Hardware in Ascot Vale is providing third prize of \$100 voucher.

Many other businesses are supporting the event with donations of essential items which would otherwise cost the club thousands of dollars if we had to purchase them. We thank the following businesses;

- Memory Lane (Stephen and Pam Chandler) <https://www.memorylane.net.au/>
- Medallion Engraving Services Pty Ltd (Andrew and Lisa Lowcock) <https://medallion.store/> for the duck tags donation \$2500.00
- Delivr Group (Xenos Kouppas) <https://delivrgroup.com.au/> for the donation of noodles \$500.00
- Elite Swimming <https://www.eliteswimming.com.au/> for two holiday programme swimming lesson vouchers \$220.00
- Jellis Craig Real Estate (Natalie Morello) for three real estate boards to advertise our race
- SpineLine Chiropractic (Michael Portelli) assessment and massage

If you want some printed flyers to put in shops, businesses, kindergartens, day care, schools, gyms, clubs, or wherever you frequent please contact Lisa. You can also use the flyer which was sent by email to put on your social media or email to your friends and family. The more tickets we sell the more we can help our local community.



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Patricia Fraser

We offer our most sincere condolences to member Alistair Fraser on the passing of his lovely wife of 60 years, Patricia. Known to most of us as Pat, she was an active part of Rotary with Alistair.

Pat loved dressing up and attending functions, chatting with her dear friends and neighbours and supporting her beloved Essendon Football Club. Pat both worked and volunteered with the football club over many years and attended many games and saw grand final success. She was a keen horse race follower attending many Spring Carnival events over the years at Moonee Valley, Flemington, Bendigo and Warrnambool.

When Alistair was Mayor of Essendon Pat took on the role of the Lady Mayoress with gusto. She chaired the Lady Mayoress' Committee which held functions and raised funds for the local community with great success. Always by Alistair's side she was his greatest supporter and asset over many years. She was a truly lovely lady.

Pat passed as a sufferer of dementia. Alistair commented at Pat's funeral the hope that the symptoms of early dementia are better known to all so that people can get

treatment at the earliest opportunity. This site might help with information <https://www.dementia.org.au/>

Pat was farewelled at St Therese's Church in Essendon on Tuesday 10th February 2026.

We will miss Pat and offer Alistair our support at this difficult time.



Coins for Polio eradication

END
POLIO
NOW

Maria informed us that we have collected over 47.7kg of coins plus many US Dollars and Euros to send to Ron Brooks who passes them on to Unicef. Unicef then purchases polio vaccines to allow Rotary to help in the eradication of this terrible disease. Our donations are matched \$ for \$. So far we have contributed over \$1700.00 to this, Rotary International's main worldwide project End Polio Now. <https://www.endpolio.org/>

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 17th February at our usual Windy Hill venue where we will hear from Lara Panjkov about her experiences studying at Oxford University. 6pm for dinner, 7pm meeting. Join us!

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A few tips to create more peace in your own life

Acknowledgment to <https://www.calm.com/blog/inner-peace>

We all crave inner peace, but in a world filled with constant distractions, stress, and pressure, finding peace within yourself can feel almost impossible. So how do you find it? True internal peace doesn't come from avoiding life's challenges—it comes from learning how to meet them with calm, clarity, and compassion.

12 mindfulness tips to help you find inner peace

1. Meditate

Despite being a simple act, [meditation](#) can profoundly affect your mental state. It helps cultivate equanimity and a deeper sense of peace.

How to meditate? Find a cosy spot away from the hustle and bustle. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and let it out slowly. Don't worry about doing it perfectly; a few minutes can make a big difference. Remember, resources like Calm are here to help. We have hundreds of meditations and programs to support you as you build your meditation practice.

2. Live in the present

How often do you find yourself stuck in the past or feeling anxious about the future? If you're like the rest of us, probably a lot. But as you know, the [present moment](#) is all we truly have. Embrace it, live it. Life unfolds in the now.

How to live in the present? When you're doing day-to-day tasks like eating, walking, or even doing chores, try to fully immerse yourself in the experience. Notice how your surroundings look, sound, smell, and feel. It's like giving your brain a mini-vacation and the effect induces a sense of inner peace.

3. Cultivate a positive mindset

Our minds are powerful things. They can act as our greatest ally or our worst enemy. It's all about the way we use them. When we learn to cultivate a positive mindset by focusing on the good, we start to develop our inner peace.

How to cultivate a positive mindset? Kickstart your day on a positive note. Jot down what you're excited about or what you're grateful for in a journal. If a negative thought tries to sneak in, cross it out and replace it with something positive.

4. Develop love for yourself

Loving others starts with loving ourselves. That's not always an easy journey. We get it. But when it comes to inner peace, the aim is to learn to appreciate who you are, cherish your strengths, and embrace your flaws. You are uniquely you, and that's something to celebrate.

How to develop love for yourself? Take a moment to write down what you love about yourself. If you hit a speed bump or two, imagine your best friend. What would they say they love about you?

5. Practice self-care

Taking care of our physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. Don't forget to set aside time for yourself every day. Not only do you deserve it, it's also an important way to cultivate self-love that leads to inner peace.

How to practice self-care? Schedule in some 'you-time.' Yes, that means put it in the calendar and stick to it! Spend the time on whatever you like — a thrilling novel, a soothing bath, a peaceful walk in nature, or even some relaxing yoga.

6. Visualize a peaceful place

Visualizing a happy or peaceful place engages your mind in a positive and calming way, acting as a form of mental escape from stressors and fostering a sense of inner peace.

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How to visualize your peaceful place? Close your eyes and think of a place where you feel utterly at peace. It could be a beach, a forest, or even a memory. What do you see, hear, or smell? When stress starts to creep in, visit this place in your mind.

7. Learn to breathe effectively

Sounds silly, right? But most of us don't use our breath to its full potential. Deep, conscious breathing can have a profoundly calming effect. In moments of stress or anxiety, take a few moments to focus on your breath. You'll soon notice that you can rely on your breath to cultivate inner peace.

How to breathe effectively? Breathe in, hold, breathe out, hold. Do this at your own pace. This can be your pause button whenever you feel like the world is spinning too fast.

8. Access nature

Nature has a soothing mental effect. Spend some time connecting with nature to instil a sense of peace within. Don't worry about doing anything too adventurous, you can keep it super simple and still get the benefits.

How to access nature? Stroll in the park, do some gardening, or watch the clouds float by. Nature soundscapes like [Yosemite National Park](#) and [Sea of Thieves: Shores of Plenty](#) are a great way to bring nature to you.

9. Be grateful

[Gratitude](#) can shift your focus from what's missing in your life to what you already have. It's a fast-track to inner peace. Make a daily habit of noting down things you're grateful for. Focusing on the good stuff can change how we look at our entire day.

How to be grateful? Write down three things that brought you joy today. They could be as simple as a delicious meal or a good laugh.

♥ If you're struggling to think of anything, try [Unwind with Gratitude](#) with Mel Mah.

10. Work on acceptance

Life is full of uncertainties and elements we can't control. Try acknowledging things as they are rather than how you wish they were. That doesn't mean being passive or giving up, but rather recognizing the reality of the situation and working with it rather than against it.

How to work on acceptance? Next time life throws you a curveball, try to let your feelings come and go without judgment. Sometimes, [accepting](#) a situation can take away its power over us.

11. Practice non-judgement

This is about learning to observe your thoughts and emotions without labeling them as 'good' or 'bad.' By practicing non-judgment, you create space for acceptance and inner peace.

How to practice non-judgement? When you catch yourself being judgmental, remember it's just a thought. It'll pass just like a cloud in the sky.

♥ Need a hand? Try [Non-Judgment](#) with Tamara Levitt.

12. Foster deeper connections

Cultivate relationships that feed your soul. Spend time with people who uplift you and bring you peace. That doesn't mean you should avoid all challenging relationships but try to have a strong support network of positive and supportive individuals.

How to foster deeper connections? Call up a friend or spend time with family members that make you feel seen and supported. Be present in those interactions. These moments of togetherness can bring us peace in ways we might not realize. (Or [join a Rotary Club!](#) Ed.)

C O N T A C T

Being an Italian is fun!

These people are Italian!



These people are not but wish they were!



ROCKIN' ON THE DANCE FLOOR!



C O N T A C T

WE THANK OUR WONDERFUL DUCK RACE SPONSORS

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C O N T A C T



THESE BOYS ARE CLEARLY ENJOYING
THEIR CANNOLI



No use hiding; we know you love your cannolo and
we know who you are ...



It's Valentine's Day every day for
these loved up couples.



C O N T A C T

**THE GREAT ESSENDON
ROTARY DUCK RACE**



SUNDAY 1ST MARCH 2026

10AM \$12 per ticket for a racing duck

PRIZES TO THE VALUE OF

1ST \$2000 2ND \$750 3RD \$100

MARIBYRNONG RIVER ESSENDON

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C O N T A C T



FOUR-WAY TEST

FOUR QUESTIONS – 24 WORDS

**THE UNIQUE
STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS**

IS IT THE TRUTH?

- Clarity
- Transparency
- Fact checking
- Ethical behaviour

IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED?

- Inclusion
- Empathy
- Acceptance
- Belonging
- Accountability

**WILL IT BUILD GOODWILL AND
BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?**

- Trust
- Do good
- Feel good
- Have fun

**WILL IT BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL
CONCERNED?**

- What if scenarios
- Trade-offs
- Being creative and innovative
- Better decision making

**PROCESS TO ACHIEVE DESIRED
OUTCOMES THAT ARE ETHICAL,
FAIR AND BENEFICIAL TO ALL**

That we do our homework to collect information and to apply critical thinking by asking questions to know the difference between facts, beliefs, assumptions, and opinions as well as know what we don't know.

That we use empathy to see other points-of-view in the context of the problems to be solved and the goals to be reached.

That the process is civil, and there is a feeling of respect and openness to ask the "dumb" question, they can lead to creative and innovative answers. Also, people prefer to work with people they like, respect and trust.

That these are the conflict transformative answers and decisions that can lead to mutually satisfying solutions, that are sustainable and scalable. This can be an iterative process as we learn more from doing and continuously improving with time.

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