

Contact

PO Box 161 Essendon VIC 3040

Rotary
Club of Essendon

ABN 91036600532



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March 2 2021 meeting

Peter Baker introduced Past President Maria Kouppas who was standing in for President David Abbey.

Maria asked someone from each table to introduce guests of which there were many. Michael Donnelly, President of Keilor East Rotary Club and DG, was welcomed as was Long standing RCE member Norm Mollica. Patricia Fraser, Kerry Roe, Sandra (Tim Anderson's partner), Andrew Lowcock and John Kouppas were welcomed. Maria welcomed Steve Holman and Rod McLeod from Strathmore Men's Shed that is going to help construct the bees' boxes over time. Maria Kouppas also welcomed our guest speakers, Arthur Lah, Paul and Rom Kucera. Six other guests were welcomed.

Maria Kouppas asked Alistair Fraser to report back on the February 26 'Celebration' at Moonee Valley City Council Chambers being to community projects. Alistair noted that the night was a very successful one, with five representatives from MVCC in attendance. Ex RCE member Paul McDonald was a great MC and auctioneer. In total over \$10,000 was raised.

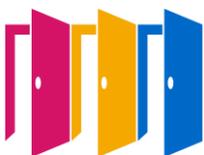
Guest speakers – Albert Lah, Paul and Rom Kucera

Michael Portelli was then invited by Peter Baker to give an update on the 100 beehives project. Michael started by noting the Moonee Valley City Council was one of the first local governments to encourage beehives in the City. The first beehive project came out of the Aberfeldie Men's Shed. It lost steam, however.

Michael has a beehive in his chiropractic practice and has had several conversations with MVCC Councillors about the revival of a beehive project.

The Strathmore Men's Shed will participate in building 100 beehives to celebrate Rotary International's one hundred years of activity in Australia. There is some discussion about drafting a media release around this theme.

Michael Portelli noted that it was great that all interested groups are coming together for this project. We hope to have ten beehives ready for use with the city of Moonee Valley by the end of next month.

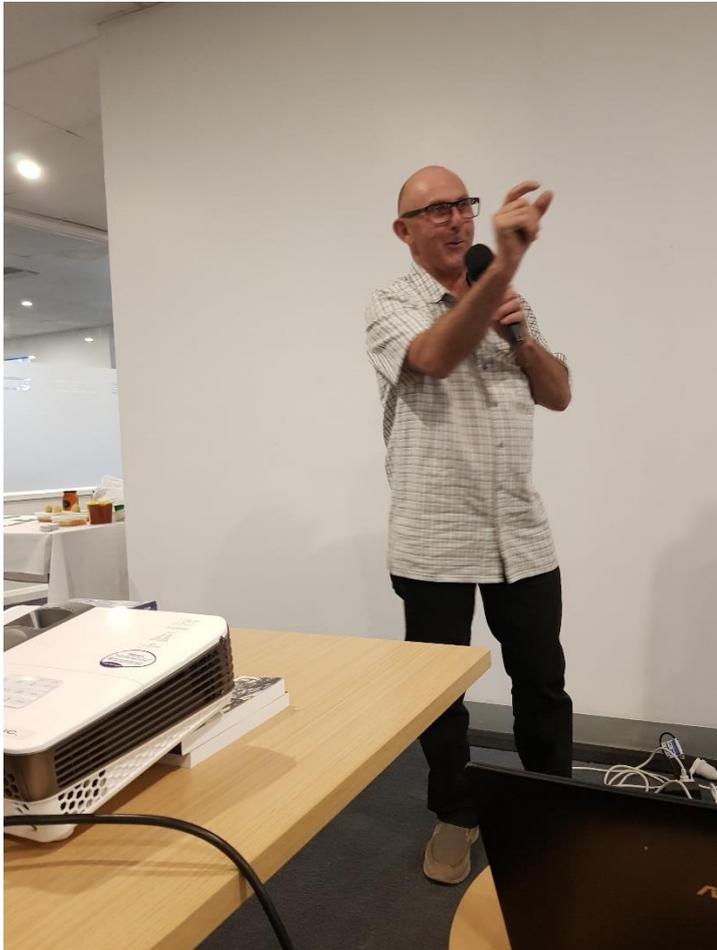


Rotary Opens Opportunities

4 March 2021
Volume 86; Issue 15

www.rce.org.au
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Michael Portelli introduced **Albert Lah**. Albert has been involved in beekeeping for around six years and has nine beehives.



Albert and his wife bought a five acre block and constructed, among other things, a vegetable patch. However, the bees were not pollinating it, so Albert installed a possum proof bar with enough space for bees to access the patch. This strategy worked.

Excess honey was sold to the local community. One of the most moving stories Albert shared was of an Asian guy who has suffering from ill health, and who bought under medical advice, three jars of honey. His health improved considerably.

A most interesting fact that Albert shared is that an average box of bees flies the equivalent of three times around the world to make one litre of honey. It takes a long time for a box of bees to build up.

The behaviour of bees is quite interesting. They are intelligent. For instance, Albert saw forty bees that flapped their wings and blew out twenty dead bees from the box.

Albert notes that Queen bees are extremely fertile, laying up to 2000 eggs per day. Queen bees can live for several years under ideal conditions, but she faces competition from daughters and from the hive itself. During the active season, worked bees live for around five to six weeks. On average a drone lives about fifty five days.

In Australia there are over 1,700 species of bees in Australia with only 11 honey producing bees being stingless. A number of overseas species, including the European honey bees have been introduced.

In response to a question as to whether it's practical to have a beehive in one's back yard, Albert advised that it can be done, but help and advice are needed.

Son and father, Paul and Rom Kucera followed on from Albert Lah and gave a most interesting talk. Paul commented firstly how bees are vital to our survival by citing Albert Einstein: “If the bees disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man”.



Paul and Rom have been apiarist for ten years and Paul notes that it's been a great experience so far. Time consuming as well since one can spend a whole day caring for a hive.

Swarming begins in early spring. The next photograph shows how very crowded and busy swarming as a process is within a bee box. In the bee box shown on the left hand side each of the hives is numbered so that they can be reinserted in the right place. Bees are very territorial and insistent on being in the 'right' space.

Bees also have extremely sensitive smells, one hundred times more sensitive than dogs.



European bees are very popular and produce a lot of surplus honey, more so than the Australian species. Rom notes that European bees are more regimented and organised than Australian ones.

Paul and Rom note that suburbia is quickly becoming very productive for bee activity. If anyone is interested in finding out more about bees and beekeeping next Sunday's Land Line is where to be (I apologize but I've been taking lessons for Michael Portelli!)

Michael Portelli thanked Paul and Rom and Albert for their most informative talks.



Stand in President Maria Kouppas echoed Michael's thanks to our amazing guest speakers.

Maria also sincerely thanked every for attending.

Finally, Maria thanked Michael Portelli for his energy, commitment and leadership on the 100 beehives project.

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Correction to information about cleft lip project in Sri Lanka

The Cleft lip project has not been suspended as stated in Last edition of Contact. Indeed, it has commenced. What we don't have is up to date information from the RC Batarumbala.

Upcoming events

- **Special Club dinner meeting March 9**

The Rotary Club of Essendon will be holding its very own International Women's Day event.

Women in Rotary have put together an amazing group of speakers and we will be screening the event at a special club meeting.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Event: | Club dinner meeting |
| Date: | Mar 09, 2021 6:45 PM - Mar 09, 2021 8:30 PM |
| Fee: | \$30.00 |
| Location: | Angler's Tavern VIC Australia |

Featured Speakers:

- Jacinda Adern-NZ Prime Minister (Opening comments)
- Sally Capp-Lord Mayor of Melbourne
- Colin Carter - Business Leader
- Dr. Dean Freestone -CEO and Founder of Seer
- Jennifer Jones- RI President-2022-23
- Megan Clark-Australian Space Agency
- Ian Hamm-Community Broadcasting Foundation
- Adrian Nelson MC-Rotary Club of Melbourne

Further information on this link:

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

Please invite family and friends.
It would be great to have a full house.



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- **Royal Victorian Motor Yacht Club - BBQ**
RVMYC
Mar 30, 2021
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM

- **Movie at Sun Cinema Yarraville – April 14**

More details to follow.

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