



Maria Kouppas
President 2016-17

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December 6th 2016

President Maria's message

Christmas is fast approaching and the Rotary year gets busier and busier. Last week John and I, Michael Cariss, Roger Leask, Boris and Ineke Struk, Kelly and Vic Abfalter attended the inaugural Cluster Muster made up of Gateway east and Gateway West Clubs. The night was enjoyed by all, and funds raised are going towards building Toilet Blocks for schools in Bangladesh. Our club along with the other 8 clubs all donated funds for this project. The speaker for the night was **JUDY MADIGAN** Former Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly and MLA for Essendon. Her topic was *'The role of Speaker in our Parliamentary process and an insider's reflections on the apparent 'loss of faith' in the political process in the Western world.'*

Today we were taken back in time with David Abbey accompanied by his wife Cindy, gave us a most enjoyable presentation on the life and times of Royce Abbey and how Jean Influenced and assisted him in his many Rotary Roles. The Rotary International Blue Jacket and the countless Paul Harris Fellow pins all brought back many memories.

Before the presentation it was my honour on behalf of Foundation to present to one of our members A Royce Abbey Award. The awardee of this prestigious Rotary award is a member of this club, who has not only served his club in all aspects of the Rotary ethos, but also serving his community whether as a Rotarian or as a member of the Monee Valley Community. A dedicated husband, father, brother, as well as a loyal committed friend.

Congratulations to Maurice Mollica, your commitment to Rotary is inspirational, and you are one of the few that can Honestly say you were also a good friend of Royce and Jean Abbey



“The Rotary network is amazing in how it connects and supports local and international communities”

Cathy Nicou - RC Essendon



So why are you in Rotary? What does Rotary mean to you? We have asked this of the Board members and you see their quotes on the front page of Contact each week. Where is your comment, please email me your quote 20 words or less, so we can share this with the readers of our weekly contact?

Please note next week we will not have a lunchtime meeting but will have our Christmas party at Harrys Bar, all are welcome, and I am certain there will be some special surprises for all.

Our first new member for this Rotary year in Jenny Mann will be inducted, and we have welcomed a few more prospective members to our lunch time meetings over the last few weeks. Special thank you to Michael Portelli who is supporting these prospective members through the weekly meetings and ensuring they get a chance to meet the members.

This the time of gift giving and sharing love and goodwill with all. For this reason, I ask that you may consider bringing along a gift up to the value of \$20 for a boy or girl to our Christmas meeting next week. President Nominee Veronica O'Sullivan will collect these gifts and get them to Caroline Chisolm Foundation in time to be distributed to families in time for Christmas. REMEMBER DO NOT WRAP THE GIFT. If you do not have time to go out shopping for a gift consider donating the money to Veronica on the night and she will ensure that additional gifts are purchased.

Quote of the day ;

Put Life into Rotary – Your Life (Royce Abbey).



Maurice Mollica receiving the Royce Abbey award from David Abbey with President Maria by his side, 45 years of service to Rotary

The speaker for the day was David Abbey was invited to speak to the members and guests present by President Maria.

David thanked Maria for the invitation to speak and also thanked the Essendon Rotarians for making him and his wife Cindy welcome.

His talk in the first person –

“Again I am filled with trepidation as I start to speak to this Rotary Club, especially about my Dad Royce Abbey. Most of you have heard me speak before, either at a club meeting, the 25th anniversary of Royce’s year as President of Rotary International and even at his funeral at the start of 2014 and of course you have heard me speak at length about the Royce Abbey Award and the Royce and Jean Abbey Vocational Scholarship.

Some of you will have firsthand knowledge of some of the subjects I will be touching on.

This invitation to speak came about while talking with Maria and I happen to mention that while going through Mum & Dad’s apartment after Dad’s passing, I had come across Dad’s personal diaries and had found a hand

written copy of Dad’s first job talk in 1954/55.

How exciting said Maria, would you like to come along to the club and speak about Royce Abbey she asked and I said no worries confidently as I knew I had put it somewhere safe!!! Well I turned the house and garage upside down but could not find the diaries, as I must have put it a really safe place where even I could not find it.



So Maria I am here under false pretence and you have my sincere apologies.

But Cindy has great faith in St Anthony and is confident it will be located, especially yesterday after she unearthed a series of folders which I had assumed were also, in a safe spot. So, no Royce Abbey job talk today.

Let's start with my credentials: my name is David Royce Abbey. That is a good start.

Royce joined the Rotary Club of Essendon in 1954, which was the year of my birth, so I have had a lifetime connection with this club.

And today whilst I will be talking about Royce I want to highlight the importance of the Rotary Club of Essendon to him personally, to his achievements in Rotary and to his achievements outside Rotary. And I want to stress the importance of the lifelong friendships made within this Rotary Club to both Royce and Jean and to our whole family.

And you must all realise you are, and will forever be, 'The Home Club of Royce Abbey, President of Rotary International 1988/89', a title to be proud of but also one you will have to live up to in the future.

Some members will have known Royce for decades and been part of his successes. Others will have met him when he was in his advanced years. Other more recent members will have heard the name and know of the reputation but little more.

I will attempt to do justice to you all with a summary of his life and times and a few reflections on what I think made him tick.

A bit of history, and I will be quick:

- Albert Henry Royce Abbey was born in Footscray on the 8th of June 1922, the fifth of seven children.
- The names? Henry and Royce were the names of his two uncles on his mother's side, who were killed in France during WWI.
- His Dad was a train inspector at the Newport Rail yards.
- He attended Geelong Road Primary School and after a less than stellar academic career left school at age fourteen.

He obtained work at Wittner's Shoe Store where his older brother Bill worked as a manager. Royce was initially an odd jobs boy, shining shoes, cleaning windows, sweeping floors and wrapping shoe boxes with paper and string. He then progressed to storeroom duties and then some sales.

He then moved on to a real estate agency, where one of his jobs was collecting rents, in and around Footscray. He had thought his future may have been in Real Estate sales but WWII intervened. He enlisted in the Citizens' Military Force in November 1941 at age nineteen and then into the Australian Infantry Battalion in October 1942.

He trained in WA and Queensland before being deployed to PNG and New Britain. In all he spent nearly two years of his service overseas, mainly in New Britain where he experienced sickness, isolation, uncertainty and I am sure boredom. But more significantly he experienced direct engagement with the Japanese Army.

He was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal for his bravery and leadership during the taking of Mt Sugi, after he, then as a sergeant, took command after his superior officers were wounded. He returned to Australia for Officer Training and thankfully Peace was declared before he had to return to the conflict.

The prospect of returning filled him with dread and in later years he expressed doubt that he would have been able to face another tour of duty.

It is probably not known, even within this club, that later in life he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He could never watch war movies, he questioned the description of himself as a war hero and suffered nightmares, which increased as he grew older.

But at the same time his war experiences positively shaped his approach to life and his positive attitude. What could be worse than what he had experienced?

'Give it a go' 'No such word as can't' 'They won't shot you if you fail' 'Begin and the rest is easy' and 'Tackle one job at a time' were words we heard growing up and I am sure members of this club will have heard similar exhortations from Royce to put in a bit more effort. His motivation invariably worked.

The expressions were not just a learned mantra. They were genuine. Maybe the challenges of civilian life, of raising a family, of building a business, of getting things done in Rotary were nothing compared to engaging in combat with your life and others' lives at stake, relying on instinct and initiative to survive.

After the war he married Jean and settled into civilian life. The Real Estate business was no longer open and he obtained a clerical job in a knitwear company. This was not to last long.

Brother Bill had started his own backyard business making wooden toys and when demand increased and he started building wooden blinds. Royce joined him in the back yard business which grew. Bill and Royce were then joined by younger brothers Angus and Norm in a window furnishing business which was known as Dural Leeds.



It was a perfect combination of timing and personnel. The post war building boom was underway. Bill was the astute businessman, Angus and Norm had the technical expertise and Royce was, you guessed it, the marketing manager. Talk about synergy!

In summary, the business grew, it took over its opposition around the country, successfully listed on the stock exchange and became so successful it in turn was taken over by Hunter Douglas, a New York based corporation.

At age 53, Royce found himself financially secure, and semi retired! What was he to do? Yes Rotary started playing an even greater role in his life.

As I mentioned Royce joined the Rotary Club of Essendon in 1954, gave his job talk shortly thereafter, was president in 1963/64, District Governor in 1969/70, a Board Member of Rotary International in 1976/77 and 1977/78 until ultimately achieved the role as President of Rotary International for 1988/89. Following the role as President he was a Trustee and then Chair of the Trustees of the Rotary Foundation. Not bad credentials!

And as I list the series of roles it seems to flow so smoothly and inevitably. That was not the case. I have spent time reading through Dad's diaries where he expressed his doubts about his capacity to do the job, whether his lack of education would limit him, whether the role was beyond him. It may appear now as a *fait accompli* but it was never a certainty that he would apply, or that he would get the job.

And then there was Mum's role. She did not want him to apply, did not want him to get the role and wanted nothing more than to stay at home in Greenvale. But that was not to be. I am not sure Dad ever obtained her express consent but maybe let's say he received her silent acquiescence.

I have mentioned on many occasions before, that the formal vote taken at the meeting to confirm Royce's nomination was not unanimous, as you would have expected. One hand was raised in dissent. That was Mum's.

But history has shown they were a great combination. Mum's down to earth attitude with no false airs or graces was immediately accepted and she was a perfect foil for Royce's exuberance and enthusiasm. He would not have survived without her.

And one other misconception I need to clear up. That Dad had a great memory for names and faces. The truth is he got away with bluff but mostly with Jean's prompting. She remembered names, faces, spouses and children and would provide Dad with the essential facts in the few seconds before he vigorously shook a hand or kissed a cheek.

They were a perfect combination.

Of course there were Royce's other community contributions and I will not attempt to list them all but let's just mention President of the Victorian YMCA and the Chair of the National Board of YMCAs, a Life Governor of the YMCA, Chair of the Epworth Foundation, one of the founders, a chair and a patron of the Rotary Health Research Fund and numerous other organisations.

He became a Member of the Order of Australia in 1988, an Officer in 2001 and also Victorian of the Year in 1989.

Remember, I am just touching the surface with this list of contributions and achievements.

And what about a Paul Harris Fellow? Take your pick of those on the table. Admittedly some are Jeans.

Can I let you into a secret? At what was Dad's last public engagement to celebrate the 25th year since his presidency an award of a Paul Harris badge was made to Jean, as soon as she realised what was happening she quickly removed the similar Paul Harris Badge she was wearing to make room for the next one!

You will have noticed that part of today's presentation is 'show and tell'. You will notice:

- the official blue jacket worn by Royce and his District Governors in 1988/89,
- what I believe is Royce's original Rotary Badge
- a box containing a lapel badge and one cuff link with the seal of the President of the United States of America and with George Bush Senior's name etched inside (Yes, only one cuff link. Much to Dad's embarrassment he lost the other one)
- A signed copy of the Nomination Form for the Office of President of Rotary International
- A copy of an important book in Dad's life, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by Normal Vincent Peal,
- A number of Paul Harris Fellowship Badges, some of which are Jean's other few other bits and pieces.

Feel free to have a look later. There is plenty more where that came from and I am now aware I do not have what it takes to be an archivist. But reeling off a list of Royce's achievements misses an important ingredient: that is the support and friendships gained from membership of the Rotary Club of Essendon. This club was a significant part of his life and it played a significant role in our family's life.



My sister Susan was an exchange student to the USA, we hosted numerous exchange students when the exchange program was in its infancy and I can remember car rallies, cricket matches against the Rotary Club of Keilor, New Years Eve parties, committee meetings at our home and countless social functions.

In my search for the mythical job talk I came across the Club's membership booklet for 1969/70, the year Royce was District Governor. The names are part of my childhood and some of the names will be familiar to a few of you:

Graham Allison, who would have buried a few Rotarians over the years and who received a Royce Abbey Award earlier this year,

Fred Barnett, our dentist with three gorgeous daughters,

Ray Carter, with his plum puddings,

Henry Curwen-Walker, our family solicitor who gave me my first job,

John Honson, the architect who shared a wedding anniversary with both Royce and Jean and Ian and Joan Muir,

Jim Lamers, who tried to fix my bad back,

Fred Landgren, from whom we bought our shoes,

David Manning, who sold us insurance,

Ian Muir, from whom we brought all our electrical appliances, and by coincidence I spoke to Andrew Muir just this weekend following the settlement of the sale of the Good Guys to JB Hi Fi.

Bob Nicholson, at whose shop in Buckley Street we did all our grocery shopping

John Steele, from whom we purchased all our hardware in Puckle Street,

And later on Maurie and Norm Mollica from whom we purchased our tyres.

And I failed to mention the Stracks, Whitings, Merlos, Plares and many, many others.

In short, Rotary was my family's primary social circle and it appears our commercial network as well.

Without such a strong social network would the Rotary Club of Essendon ever have achieved what it has over the years, would it have produced the number of District Governors it has produced, would it ever have produced a Board member, let alone a President of Rotary International? I think not.

So, this brings me to the question, 'Does this strong social network exist in Rotary Clubs today?' Do Rotary clubs have groups of members who grow and develop together to form lifelong friendships with Rotary as the catalyst? Surely that is the key to a successful Rotary Club. But how do you generate that social network? It must come naturally.

You want members to be involved, for them to volunteer, to contribute, to turn up to meetings. They will not do so unless they belong to a circle of friends who they want to spend time with. Otherwise Rotary becomes a chore, yet another commitment in an already busy life.

In this Rotary Club I see a history of strong bonds and as a result strong contributions.

In more ways than one, it is a club 'that works' and may it continue to do so.

And one area in which it is working is with the Royce Abbey Award and the Royce and Jean Abbey Vocational Scholarship. We have a scholarship recipient from Uganda on the way here for three months in 2017 and another positive application from the Rotary Club of Bendigo for an applicant from Samoa.

Of course these scholarships are not possible without, 'money in the bin' as Royce would say. That 'money in the bin' has been fed by the Royce Abbey Awards, an initiative of this club. Each Award carries with it a club donation to the Royce and Jean Abbey Endowed Fund within the Rotary Foundation.

Those selected for the Award are those who show enthusiasm and commitment to Rotary. The sort of Rotarian Royce would be proud to see wearing a badge bearing his likeness.

So, Maria, I again thank you for your invitation and I thank the Rotary Club of Essendon for the role it has played in my family's life over the last 62 years.

The Rotary Club of Essendon, forever the 'Home Club of Royce Abbey, President of Rotary International 1988/89'

**Other Matters**

Sergeant Michael Cariss called Neil Henderson to say grace and Ian Thomas to Toast the Australian flag, Sergeant Michael invited President Maria to the podium and Maria welcomed the guests, Larry Marshall, Exchange student Nina who received her dinner badge, Bev Symth, and Ken Livingstone Past President of the Rotary Club of Williamstown and guest of Steven Wojnarowski.

Sergeant Michael announced that it was Roger Leask's birthday and he had to pay a fine as well Neil Henderson whose wife Mary celebrated a birthday as well.

Tamara Hycenko won the first draw of the raffle and Lino won the next two.

STEAM TRAIN DAY ADDENDUM

Last week's report on Steam Train Day inadvertently left out the name of one of our sub-committee members, **Roger Priestley**, who was one of the biggest contributors to the success of the Day both socially and financially. Thanks Roger for another big contribution to another big RCE event which was attended by more than 600 people.

Days for Girls

A huge Thank You to you ALL for your interest, support, friendship and generosity in donating items and giving of your time to helping our team make and complete Approx 450 Packs this year for our wonderful cause DFG.

Many have been sent to Tanzania, Timor Leste, Burma, Solomon Islands, and Cambodia. Early in the New Year Cherrie & I will be looking into finding out how and where we can contact the people who will see that they are taken, distributed and correctly taught to the girls and ladies the hygiene and use of the Packs.

A great problem is the Shipping Costs to get them to the countries where they are needed, if anyone has any contacts regarding Shipping we would be most grateful to hear from you.

Our next SEW - IN - DAY will not be until Friday 3rd March 2017, January is out as people have holiday and other commitments, Cherrie will be away for a month from Mid. Jan. --- Mid Feb. and Cherrie & I have commitments the last two weekends in February.

If you do want to do something at home during this spell please contact Cherrie 0414 459 487 or Myself 93901317.

Thanking you all

Warmest wishes for a happy & safe Christmas and New Year. 🎄

Marianne (Coordinator) Keilor Gateway Cluster Vic. Australia Team.

LET'S CELEBRATE AUSTRALIA DAY IN ESSENDON – Invitation

The Australia Day Breakfast is back in 2017 run by a committee of local citizens including our own Past President Alan Murphy with Judy Maddigan, Rosemary McKenzie and Sam Pennisi.

This group asks Essendon Rotarians to join for breakfast on 26th January and hear guest speaker, Bill Shorten outline how he sees Australia's future looking towards 2050.

The annual breakfast was an iconic local event since 1994 run by the Lions Club of Essendon. The Lions have decided to discontinue the project, but Alan and his team believe it is too good a project to let go. Proceeds from the breakfast will go to the Essendon Courthouse Museum Restoration Fund

It will be held at the Moonee Ponds Bowls Club in Queen's Park at 7.45am for 8.00 through to 9.30am. Cost is all –inclusive \$30 per person.

The Federal Opposition Leader is of course our local Member who went within one seat of forming government back in July.

If you would like to join your fellow Essendon citizens to celebrate the Day give Alan a call on 0412 298 666 or email

ajmurphy305@gmail.com



Letter from Foundation Grants Sub-committee chair to Roger Leask

Dear Roger

Thank you on behalf of the District Foundation Committee for the work that you are doing in you respective Clubs to promote Foundation.

This email is to update you after the first 6 months of the Rotary year and to send you a copy of the District 9800 Grants Audit. This review was carried out by PDG Jim Studebaker, PDG John Davis and PP Adrian Ranson as an independent assessment of the processes followed by the District Grants Team. The process truly demonstrates why Foundation is a top Charity.

Download the report [here](#)

DISTRICT GRANTS

It's not too late for your Club to apply for a District Community or International Grant. There is over \$30,000 left to distribute. Applying for a Grant is easy and "there is no harm in asking" The worst that we can say is "sorry but not this time"

FOUNDATION WEBSITE & FACE BOOK PAGE

Could you also ensure that your Club Newsletter and website contains links to both our District 9800 Foundation website and Facebook page?

<http://www.district9800foundation.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/D9800Foundation/>

If there is anything that I or your Foundation Coordinators can help with please don't hesitate in getting in touch!

Yours in Rotary Service

MARK STEPHENS

D9800 Foundation Grants Subcommittee Chair

Cluster Muster Group Meeting photos





Past President Ken Livingston from the Rotary Club of Williamstown with Steven Wojnarowski



2017 DISTRICT 9800 CONFERENCE SHEPPARTON - VICTORIA 30 MARCH - 1 APRIL



Connecting Communities - Serving Humanity

Dear Rotarians and Friends

This is a short note to give you an update of the Rotary D9800 Conference in Shepparton in 2017.

We have a great range of speakers and entertainers on our program and you can see their details on our website. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates (<https://www.facebook.com/D9800Conference/>).

If you haven't registered yet, there are discounts and concessions available for early bird registration. These apply to bookings made and paid for by November 30th, so get in quick while the offer lasts. Registrations can be made through our website www.rotaryconference.org.au.

If you have registered, check out the website for ideas about pre and post conference tours. Of particular note is a visit to the cellar door of our Official Wine Supplier, Tallis Wines. The wine, food and views are great and there is a walking trail for the energetic. Tallis is offering visitors discounts of 10% if you buy 6 bottles of wine at the cellar door and 25% if you join their wine club.

I hope this update is useful and I look forward to seeing you in Shepparton in 2017.

Yours in Rotary

Kevin Love
Conference Chair

Rotary Club of Essendon - Christmas 🎄 Party 13th December 2016

HARRY'S BAR in Young St Moonee Ponds

6.30 for 7pm start

3 course dinner and tea / coffee

Drinks at bar prices

(Or BYO wine only \$8/bottle)

\$70/ head

This includes a glass of bubbly or orange juice on arrival and a ticket to our Christmas raffle with lots of fabulous Christmas prizes

🎁 to be won on the night

Note we will set up try booking within the week.....



EVENTS CALENDAR

DATE	SPEAKER/EVENT	VENUE
Tuesday 13 th December	Christmas dinner meeting	Harry's Bar 9 Young Street Moonee Ponds (formerly Vicolo)
Tuesday 20 th December	Board meeting followed by Breakfast	Poynton's Café The Boulevard Aberfeldie @7.30 am
Tuesday 27 th December to 10 th January 2017	NO LUNCH MEETINGS	
17 th January 2017	Joint meeting with RC Essendon North	To be confirmed
24 th Jan 2017		
31 st January 2017	Steve Roe & Richard Lawrence – Kokoda Trek	The Anglers Tavern 12.30 pm for 1pm to 2pm
Thursday 26 th January 2017	Australia Day BBQ	Home of Boris & Ineka Struk
Fri 17 & Sat 18 February 2017	Relay for Life	
3 rd March 2017	Delegation to Myanmar & Cambodia	
Fri 24 th March 2017	Art Show Gala Opening	
Sat 25 th & Sun 26 March	Art Show	
30 th March to 1 st April 2017	District Conference	
May 2017	Graffiti clean-up day	TBC
Tuesday 16 th May 2017	Charter Night	





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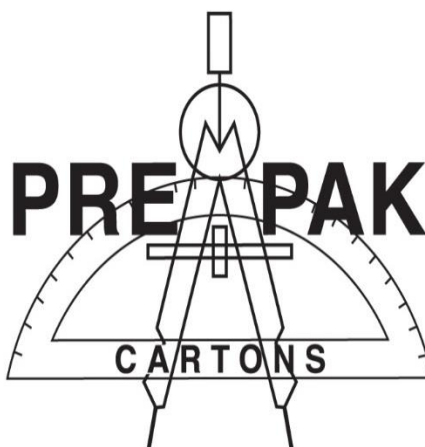
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Strathmore **Community Bank®** Branch



Help yourself and help the Club by banking with Strathmore Community Bank. For example, take out a home loan and the club will receive up to \$500. Take out a 3 month fixed term deposit and the club will receive up to \$50.

For more details drop into the branch at 337 Napier St or call branch Manager Philip Stewart on 9374-2607.



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