

**And the next meeting – 2nd February
Highlands Hotel, Mittagong**

Rotary International President Holger Knaack's theme for 2020-21,

Rotary Opens Opportunities,

asks Rotarians to create opportunities that
strengthen their leadership,
help put service ideas into action
and **improve the lives of those in need.**

19 January, 2020

Thanks to Trevor for notes...

President Rod welcomed all to the Welby Garden Centre and provided a brief outline for the proposed Community Garden which is to be located adjacent to Welby House.

Tony McElhinney, Manager of Challenge SH then gave an outline of the history of Challenge SH and the Garden Centre.

The facility was opened in 1984, initially as a day care centre for adults with disabilities. Government policy believed that the attendees would be better served if they were employed.

Challenge SH was incorporated on 25th May 1993 with Brian Fryer the founding President. The garden facility started by selling native plants, which as any local knows would not be a popular move. Once the line switched to cold climate plants the facility became financially profitable.

Currently between 10k-12k roses are sold each year. By the March sale each year, most stock is sold. However between June – August the facility is restocked for the next rowing cycle.

Challenge SH employs 57 staff, including 20 nursery staff and 47 support staff.

Challenge SH has recently purchased a block of land with the aim of building a house to assist children of aging parents. Another set of parents are partnering with Challenge to construct a home for their son so he has permanent accommodation for all his life.

The wage bill is \$3m pa with the main source of income coming from the nursery. Work crews are trained to go into the community to maintain private gardens. The facility used to build pallets for companies like Tyree, however with the bushfires etc there is a shortage of suitable materials. Staff also provide a packaging service for Tyree & Dux, as well as a secure document shredding service. This service has grown to such an extent that all shredding is now undertaken at the RRC.

Some of the staff participate in art classes, with identified works turned into greeting cards. The artists get \$0.50 royalty for each card which sell for \$5 in the shop.

The meeting then adjourned for a self-catered meal that was prepared by some members. There was much discussion about whether doing this occasionally was a good idea. What do you think?

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Guest Speaker – **Jill Cockram** – Moss Vale Community Garden Co-ordinator

All community gardens are set up differently. The MVCG was an initiative of Anglicare, which was trying to address male suicide. This community garden now wins prizes at the MV Show and is very proud of their heritage plants. In fact one bean has its origins from the HMS “Supply” of First Fleet fame.

Membership of MVCG costs \$25 pa, with a big focus on the community aspect. Volunteers are the key to success for community gardens. Currently there are 15 active members and 25 in total.

The Community Garden participates in a Seed Saver program and has numerous old variety of apples planted on the site allowing fruit to be ripe from December to July.

The Garden also runs gardening seminars with focus on permaculture and grafting days.

Announcements

Next Tuesday 26/1 is Australia Day, and by a show of hands, members decided to have the week off.

Upcoming program includes:

2nd February Dom Williams
Indigenous Community
Development Fund

9th Feb Andrew Buttfield
 Sydney Bridge Climb
 Highlands Hotel

18th Feb **Thursday** **February birthdays**
 Imperial Hotel

President Rod advised that the RC of Berrima District is to decide their future as a Club.

Some of the more long-term members may know that past member Charlie Johns passed away recently.