

ROTARY CLUB CANBERRA SUNRISE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

It gives me pleasure to report on the activities of the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise for 2025-26.



We were very saddened at the passing of one of great stalwarts in the club – Dr. Garth Britton. Garth was a very much valued member of the club from 2001 up until the end of last year when illness meant he could not contribute as he would have liked. Right from the start, he was enthusiastic to help in so many ways. Over the years, he served as Secretary, Vocational Director, newsletter editor, website manager and President to name a few.

Other roles included Chair of the National MUNA Committee for over six years and also as Chair of the inaugural District Peace Fellows Committee for over ten years. Garth was also active with the Rotary Wash Group. These all resulted in him being named as the District Rotarian of the Year for 2016-17.

We will miss him and his steady guidance for over twenty years. As already mentioned, a Memorial Service will be held at the Commonwealth Club on Thursday

9 July at 3.00 pm. All members are encouraged to attend to mark his 'Service above Self'. Could I ask all of you to rise for a minute to mark your respect for Garth.

Thank you.

At the planning day for this year, held in May 2025, we set down some parameters where we would like to see the club by the end of June 2026. In August, the Board set out the goals to align with RI's categories and these have been matched during the year at subsequent Board meetings. I will go through them so we each know where we reached our goals or not.

The goals listed for the club are:

	Achievement	Goal
Club membership	14	22
Strategic plan updated	Yes	Yes
Service participation	20	20
TRF Annual Fund contributions (US)	\$5864	\$4000
Polio Plus Fund contributions (US)	\$1185	\$1100
Benefactors	0	0
Social achievements	12	12
Service projects	2	4
New member sponsorship	0	4
On line presence	Yes	Yes
Rotary Action Group participation	0	0
Major gifts	0	0
Rotaract clubs	0	0
Update website and social media	4	4
Bequest Society members	0	0
Interact Clubs	0	0
Review and consider updating club bylaws	No	Yes
District conference attendance	0	0
Inbound Youth Exchange students	No	0
RYLA participation	1	1
Media stories about club projects	3	3
Rotary Fellowship participation	0	0
District training participation	3	3

As you can see from that summary, we have achieved a lot, but there are still many areas where we are no longer able to participate, mainly due to a falling membership.

Even this year, four long serving members have found they needed to leave the club – Margaret Atkin moved to Hall club and Gabi, Garth and Stephen felt they no longer could retain their membership. Our membership at 30 June was 14 – a far cry from when it was well over 60.

I would now like to recognise three members for their financial support of The Rotary Foundation and I hope they may each step forward to receive their new pin – Ainslie

Sowden with PHF 2 blue stones, David Elder with PHF 3 Blue Stones and Neil Spalding with PHF 2 Blue Stones. Congratulations to you all.

Our flagship event MUNA was again very well supported by clubs and districts around the eastern states of our country. Greg Hood did an exceptional job in coordinating everything and all the delegates left inspired with how the UN works and how their country views many important policy areas. This year we have what we can call a 'full house' of delegates and I want to thank David for stepping up to write the resolutions the delegates will debate. Thank you David – it was a great relief to me to know this task was completed.

The standard of debate from the delegates was exceptionally high this year which made it all the harder for the six adjudicators to determine who was placed first, second and third. For the first time, there was a tie for the winners of the Tottenhoffer prize for the team making the best contribution to peace.

Well done especially to Greg for his leadership of this event, to Helen and David for the registration process, to Gabi for completing the arrangements for the dinner etc. and to all other club members involved in the planning and 'doing' over the weekend. We received very favourable feedback from students and counsellors on how they perceived the event.







Our other main service activity is DreamCricket ably led by Yohan and supported by a former member George. We are privileged to be able to host the event at Canberra Grammar School and the students participating had a wonderful day playing their version of cricket. I know the teachers and parents welcome our efforts as the students are much more communicative following their endeavours.





We were proud to sponsor a Nalda Barrett to RYPEN last September and Alex Fetterplace to RYLA last month. Nalda gave an excellent talk to the club about her participation and hopes to be a mentor at RYPEN this year. We just need the Board to agree to fund her there – something I was told in the last week. Alex told me when I was at the RYLA dinner that she was thoroughly enthralled about all the challenges thrown at her at RYLA and had learnt a lot about her own personality and how that can be put to good use in leadership training.



Due to Greg's efforts, we agreed to sponsor Max Grech - a student from Erindale College to attend the National Youth Science Forum (NYSF). His talk to the club showed why he was successful and we look forward to hearing of his studies over the years ahead.





The Club was able to successfully apply for a District Grant for the year to develop a microforest in the Molonglo Valley. It is near the Evelyn Scott School – which caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 10 so they will all learn a lot about the environment as that is further developed. My thanks go to Stephen for his work in developing the application and in being a member of the committee up to the end of last month, despite undergoing a bout of surgeries during the year.

Our links to the Global Scholars program continue with us 'hosting' Yurika Nakayama while she undertakes her PhD studies at ANU. To help build up the bonds, we inducted her as an Honorary Member of the Club and I hope this may continue while she undertakes her studies here. It is an annual appointment, so I hope the Board agrees this continues for the 2026-27 year.

Since Yurika arrived in Canberra, she has displayed great enthusiasm in learning about the culture of our city and helping at club events. Yurika is from Osaka and undertaking a PhD at ANU where she is researching colloids – mixtures where one substance of tiny, insoluble particles are dispersed and suspended evenly through another substance but the particles do not settle out due to gravity. They are too small to be seen with the naked eye so need to be kept in suspension by constant movement. We wish Yurika every success in this field of research.

The club also continues to support the Secondary Introductory English Centre at Dickson College where we recognise a migrant/refugee student who has pushed themselves to learn English and living in this city after leaving their homeland. The winner of the Rotary Sunrise prize receives a 'box of goodies' ably chosen by Ainslie to help them in their future studies – remembering of course such student normally come with very little apart from their determination to succeed in life here. It is a privilege to see how they develop. Some of us have been invited to their 50th year

anniversary of the program in September and to see how many students they have supported over the year.



Helen has contributed well with organizing a social event with the coffee mornings working well. If you have a chance, why not join in and hopefully meet up with the friends of our club and former members as well as our active members.

Helen also works hard at arranging for school books to be packed and forwarded to our Buk bilong Pikinini project in PNG. It is great to know students in that country have the opportunity to read books donated and shipped there. The project is constant as she arranges with schools to donate books no longer needed in school libraries here in the ACT. If you know of surplus primary school aged books in ACT institutions, why not let Helen know.

Support for BbP aligns with Canberra Sunrise's wider history of international education and youth-focused projects in the Pacific region, particularly literacy and educational infrastructure initiatives.



The club was privileged to acknowledge the work of Gabi Evans at the ACT Rotary/Rotaract Awards Ceremony held in March in Nara Park - great ceremony for clubs in the ACT to recognise so much volunteer work being done in the community. Gabi was recognised for her long commitment as chief adjudicator for MUNA and spoke so well about MUNA and what a magnificent event it is for students to research and debate the views of another country. The adjudication process must always be fair to all, as well as delivering the results in a timely manner. Gabi has led the team to determine the winners and we are indebted to all her hard work to make the fairness come true in deciding with the other adjudicators who the winners are.



In April, I had the honour to attend the Probus Club of Macquarie's 30th Anniversary celebrations. This club was sponsored by RC Canberra Sunrise and some of those there remember all the work undertaken by club members of the time in ensuring a successful charter. In fact it was so successful that the Macquarie Probus Club then decided to form the Jamison Probus Club. The Macquarie Probus Club is thriving and it was a delight to pass on our best wishes to them and to wish them many more successful years. Here is a photo of some of the attendees – too many for one photo. The President, Treasurer and Secretary are in the front row – left to right.



In June, we awarded Pride of Workmanship certificates to two employees at the Mercure Hotel where we meet. Caitlin and Bill, have consistently delivered outstanding support to the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise during our Thursday morning meetings. The award recognises just how much we value their service to us and is a great example of how they put good delivery of their work above all else to ensure our meetings run smoothly.



Now to two members whom we cannot do without – Alan as Secretary and Roger as Treasurer. Alan has served the club for many years and his knowledge of all things we need to do in a governance aspect is exceptional and I know we are in great hands knowing the club conducts itself appropriately as an incorporated entity and as a part of the District. He has also been our returning officer – a vital role. Thank you Alan. Also Roger keeps the books in ‘apple pie order’ and has up to date reports ready for each Board meeting. He is also our ‘BBQ King’. Thank you Roger.

Please come forward to accept my thanks.

The club has continued to support many community activities –

The Rotary Foundation
St. John’s Care
Beyond Water Portal
Fearless Women
RAWCS Western Victoria Drought Relief
Hands Across Canberra and
Mentoring Men

Disbursements 2025 - 26

The Rotary
Foundation

St. John's Care

Beyond Water
Portal

Fearless Women

RAWCS Western
Victoria Drought
Relief

Hands Across
Canberra and

Mentoring Men

Well done Sunrisers – it makes our sausage sizzles more meaningful when we know who will benefit from our efforts.





National Carillon



Now I would like to recognise some members for their service to the club and I would ask each to come forward to receive their new PHF pin – Neil Spalding with PHF 3 blue stones, David Elder with PHF 4 blue stones, Helen Deutsch with 4 blue stones and Peter McDermott with PHF 5 blue stones. Thank you to each of you for the way you have helped the club over the years.

To conclude, I would like to quote from our Immediate Past RI President, Francesco Arezzo. Last month he emphasised the importance of continuity in Rotary's leadership: 'I like the image of a relay race. No runner owns the race. The most important moment is not the running – it is the passing. Rotary is a relay. We receive. We carry forward. We pass it on. And every generation of Rotarians must leave the organisation stronger, kinder and more hopeful for the generation that follows.' I know I have not succeeded in handing over a stronger club, but I hope we may all pull together to make Rotary itself a stronger organisation.

Thank you for asking me to be President again. I have enjoyed the year and I really hope we can move to a higher membership in the next year.

Rosemary Everett