

Notes taken during the Zoom meeting Tuesday April 28<sup>th</sup> with  
**Rotary International President Mark Maloney and General Secretary John Hewko.**

*Note that the meeting, arranged by the staff of RI in Parramatta, was pitched primarily to Rotary Senior Leaders, particularly Governors and Governors Elect, giving them the opportunity to meet Mark and John, and our RI Zone Director Rafael Garcia. 54 people attended, including Ian D & Judy R*

**Mark Maloney**

1. While Churchill is quoted as saying “Never waste a good crisis”, Mark says we should now “make lemonade out of lemons”;
2. We must make every effort to maintain connection with the Family of Rotary;
3. COVID 19 has forced us to change; we should explore ways to attract a different demographic to Rotary membership;
4. RI membership grew steadily until the mid 1990s; the only significant downturn was a loss of about a 5-6% in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Great Depression. He is hoping for no significant loss due to COVID 19;
5. Rotary has survived wars, plagues, economic hardship and every kind of natural calamity, and will surly come out of this pandemic as a stronger and even more flexible organisation;
6. RI dues: clubs should liaise with RI Parramatta re deferral or payments in smaller instalments if there is a financial burden where the majority of members have lost their source of income;
7. International Assembly (training for incoming Governors) scheduled for Orlando Feb 2021: contingency plans for those who can't attend; will be virtual if more than 40% can't attend;
8. There will be no RI President's Representative funded by RI for any conferences held during 2020 & 2021;
9. RI is in a sound position both financially and operationally;
10. Asked why R I is not taking a stronger position on Youth Exchange? Mark pointed out that Youth Exchange is a District to District program and RI cannot mandate to cancel. General Secretary has been asked to prepare a risk assessment from which RI may then act.
11. Mark is making history – his World Convention planned for Honolulu, Hawaii will be the only Convention ever cancelled since the first one that was held in 1910.

**John Hewko**

1. The Rotary Foundation Disaster Response Grants (up to \$25k per district) have to date disbursed \$4 million;
2. Eighty four COVID 19 specific Rotary Foundation Global Grants totally \$13 million have been approved;
3. Polio vaccinations have been temporarily suspended, but the Rotary infrastructure for polio is being used to tackle COVID 19 wherever possible;
4. Anticipating minimal membership loss, but history shows that the greatest risk are those with 2 to 3 years membership;
5. Seek ways to support and assist clubs that are not yet meeting virtually;
6. A challenge is fundraising and projects where face to face contact cannot occur; we should explore better and more creative strategies that can be used now and post COVID 19.

Our Zone 8 Director-Elect Jessie Harman asked if RI has or plans to have any action on the environment. Pres Mark advised that the RI Board will address that matter at the June meeting, and it is his hope that it will be adopted as an additional Area of Focus.

(It is interesting to note that RI President in 1990-91 Paulo V C Costa had a very dynamic program called “Preserve Planet Earth” when more than 50 million trees were planted, including one planted by Paulo in Rotary Park, Taree)

*Ian Dyball & Judy Richardson*