

# YBR

YARRA BEND



## ED BROWN OUR VIETNAM VETERAN

Ed reflects on his experience in Vietnam

## BRIGHT FUTURE COMMUNITY CENTRE - NEPAL

An update on Yarra Bend's major international project

## YOUTH EXCHANGE

Exploring the motivation and indentiy trajectories of stuents who participate in exchange program to France

## NATIONAL YOUTH SCIENCE FORUM

Patrick reports on his journey at and beyond the NYSF

**YARRA BEND ROTARY**  
MAY 2016 EDITION 2

# Contents

- 03 President's Message**  
Yarra Bend Rotary making a contribution to our community
- 04 Ed Brown our Vietnam Veteran**  
Ed reflects on his experience in Vietnam
- 06 Vox Pop**  
Introducing Darren Grevis-james, Editor of YBR
- 07 ANZAC tribute at Kew High**  
A pre ANZAC day service at Kew High School
- 08 Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment**  
Victor and Kevin reflect on their RYPEN experience
- 10 First Associate Member Inducted**  
Liz joins the Yarra Bend Rotary
- 16 Rotarians at work**  
Cleaning up Carrical House, with Servants Commnity Housing
- 18 Youth Exchange**  
Olivier explores the motivation and indenti ty trajectories of stuents who participate in exchange program to France
- 16 Patrick and NYSF**  
Patrick reports on his journey at and beyond the National Youth Science Forum
- 20 Bright Future Community Centre**  
An update on Yarra Bend's major international project

## Coming up...

- June 1** Dennis Shore - Report on Council for legislation
- June 8** Luke Wescott -Young Entrepreneur, My Story
- June 15** Alumni Meeting - Where are you now?

If you would like to know more about Yarra Bend Rotary, please call Club Secretary David Shave on 03 9822 3750.

You might like to join us for dinner. We meet every Wednesday over dinner at the Amora Hotel 649 Bridge Road Richmond at 6:30 p.m. for 7:00p.m. Just contact the Club Secretary to make arrangements.

If you need to contact us by mail, our Mailing Address is P.O.Box 271, Kew East, Victoria, 3102 or e-mail [yarrabend@rotarydistrict9800.org](mailto:yarrabend@rotarydistrict9800.org)

### YARRA BEND EXECUTIVE

President	Justin Wibrow
Vice President	Tony Boyd
Secretary	David Shave
Treasurer	John Pocock
President Elect	Clinton Sceney

### CLUB AVENUES OF SERVICE

Community	Bob Lambert
Club Service	Darren Grevis-James
Foundation	Clinton Sceney
International	Isabel Armer
Vocational	Matt Pollard
Youth	Anne Brown

### ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

K. R. (Ravi) Ravindran

### DISTRICT GOVERNOR

Julie Mason

### ASSISTANT GOVERNOR

Gabe Hau

### BULLETIN

Editor	Darren Grevis-James
Designer	Charles Tuchtan

### CLUB PROTECTION & PRIVACY OFFICER

John Orr



From office of the

# President

Welcome to Yarra Bend Rotary's monthly magazine, YBR! Thank you for opening our publication we trust your curiosity will be rewarded. If you read our first edition, thank you and welcome back!

With YBR aiming to share the positive impact we are making in your community and showing the human face of our club we are sure you will find this month's edition interesting, informative and entertaining.

Rotary at times is perceived as something "my father or grandfather" did. Yarra Bend Rotary holds true to the principles of Rotary as we "give service above self" however as a modern and dynamic club we are constantly innovating.

Our most recent exciting news is the introduction of our 'Associate' membership. The pages within this edition share the momentous occasion of inducting our first Associate, Liz. Created in response to the ever changing and increasing demands on people, this form of membership

provides greater flexibility in making a contribution that targets an area of your interest. Sound interesting? We would love to tell you about it and provide you with some information so please do drop us a line via the website or feel free to email me personally on the email address below.

As an innovative club changing with the times and with life providing competing interests we understand Rotary may not appear your first choice to realise your community contribution, however no such introduction is complete without mentioning our continued interest in reaching individuals considering trying the Rotary experience. So why not come along to a meeting and say hello?

So whether you are reading this online, as an email attachment or even in hard copy at a doctor's surgery, why not connect with us by subscribing to our magazine online, following us on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter? We welcome your feedback, project ideas and enquiries about how to join or if it just to come check us out.

Justin

Justin Wibrow is the 2015-16 President of Yarra Bend Rotary

[justin.wibrow@yarrabendrotary.com.au](mailto:justin.wibrow@yarrabendrotary.com.au)





# Vietnam Veteran Ed Brown

BY DARREN GREVIS-JAMES

**Darren Grevis-James spoke with Yarra Bend member Ed Brown about his service in Vietnam**

Ed Brown left the family farm in 1968 to serve in the Vietnam War.

Aged twenty, Ed was a fresh young National Serviceman, called up the previous year for 24 months service in the Australian Army.

Born at Maroopna in the Goulburn Valley, Ed was one of three boys and spent his childhood years around Tatura. He left Shepparton Tech at an early age to work on his families farms just over the border at Deniliquin and Finley.

"Finley was pretty isolated in those days," Ed recalls. "We were about twenty miles out town and there were few sealed roads. In the wet it was almost impossible to get into town, so we were somewhat cut-off. The Brown family ran cross-bred ewes for fat lamb production and grew crops. "Life was good, we cleared the land; it was a bit of a frontier."

In 1966, Ed registered for the ballot. His number came out and then he got a letter telling him to report for duty at Kapooka one of the Army's basic training centres near Wagga Wagga. The people of Jerilderie gave Ed a warm send-off. The reception he got when he came home from

Vietnam two years later proved to be very different.

"A bus came to collect me in Deniliquin and after a long trip around southern New South Wales, our busload of conscripts were off-loaded at Kapooka," Ed recalls.

It was three months of hard training and strict discipline and at the end of it Private Ed Brown was allotted to the Royal Australian Signals Corps. "After that I did my trade training at the old Balcombe camp at Mount Martha and was then posted to 2nd Signals Regiment at the Watsonia Army camp.

Another posting quickly followed for Ed and this time he was sent off to Defence HQ in Canberra to join 135 Signals Squadron as a keyboard operator. "I thought this is going to be a pretty easy two years in the Army," Ed mused. Unknown to Ed was that he and other signals soldiers were being highly trained for a much more important posting. "One day I was encouraged to join a 'select team' of signallers bound for Vietnam. At that time in Vietnam, Australian commanders were struggling with inexperienced signallers dealing with highly classified

secret messaging."

Soon after Ed was sent off to Canungra in Queensland to do pre-deployment training ahead of Vietnam. About this time Ed married Anne. Two weeks of leave followed, then in January 1968, Ed was taken aboard HMAS Sydney (aka the Vung Tau Ferry) and on his way to war.

"We were put ashore on a beach in Vietnam and every soldier was handed an SLR rifle," Ed recalls.

"I climbed aboard a truck with another group of soldiers and we headed towards Vung Tau." But trouble lay ahead. A Sergeant ordered Ed to fire his weapon at a Viet Cong suspect but the SLR failed to fire. "I checked the rifle, adjusted the gas setting, re-loaded a round but it still wouldn't fire. It turned out the bolt was missing inside the rifle," Ed says. Later on he was 'charged' by an officer for having not checked his weapon to ensure it was fully operative. "A Sergeant went in to challenge the offence, and came back soon after telling me my rifle now had a bolt and all charges were to be dropped."

Ed was now with the 110 Signal Squadron and assigned as a signals operator at the Free World Military Assistance Office (FWMAO) in Saigon. This building was also home to the headquarters of the Australian Forces Vietnam.

"One of my jobs was to hand-carry highly classified signals aboard RAAF Caribou aircraft on a run that took us from Saigon to Vung Tau and Nui Dat." Day shifts at the communications centre were twelve hours and at night we had to do picket duty down at the Phu Tho HQ as well as at the Australian Embassy.

Just as Ed arrived in Saigon, early 1968 heralded a tumultuous turn of events

in the Vietnam conflict. It was the start of the 'Tet Offensive'. The Paris Peace Accord Conference was about to begin and America was notionally winning the war. The North Vietnam communist government believed that if they could capture Saigon it would be a major bargaining chip at the Peace Conference.

Suddenly all hell broke loose. The war was now on the doorstep of Saigon. "The Viet Cong attacks were mostly at night and much of it was aimed at ethnic minority Chinese communities," Ed recalls. The communications centre was now vulnerable. "We had no infantry and our only protection was provided by American gunship helicopters. We were on red alert for three months; just sitting ducks and you never knew if you were going to be blown-up."

In April, Viet Cong forces lobbed a 122 millimetres Rocket into the north west corner of the FWMAO compound and rear link communications facility starting a major blaze that burned out the HF transmission Antenna.

Ed and the other Signallers lived in the famous Hotel Canberra, a run-down place in Saigon that would also soon come under direct attack. "It had

virtually no security apart from some makeshift sand bagging around the front of the building. We were vulnerable to attack in that place and later on it was almost destroyed."

Looking back on his tour of Vietnam, Ed says probably his worst experience was the truck ride into town when his weapon failed to fire, and that puts any soldier under enormous pressure. But there were good times too says Ed, the cans of cold beer he shared with mates and kiwi soldiers at end of each day's shift.

He came back to Australia in July 1968 having completed his tour of duty. It was not a happy experience. "We flew into Sydney at night and greeting us at the airport were the protestors hurling abuse at the young soldiers."

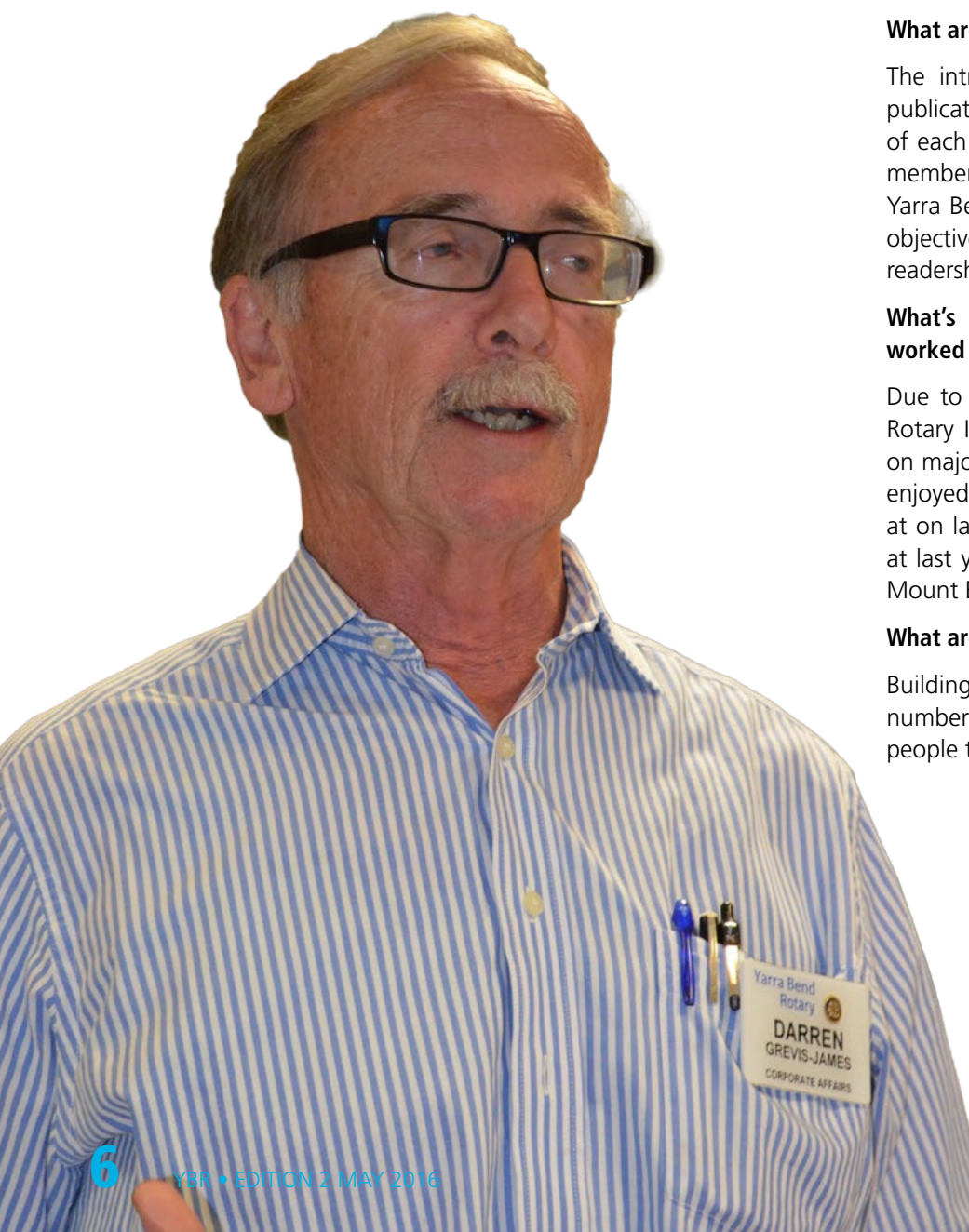
One of the hardest adjustments for all Vietnam veterans was the transition back to civilian life when they got out of uniform and Ed experienced marginalisation not only by war protestors but by others he thought would have embraced the latest Anzacs. "When I returned home, the Finley sub branch of the RSL let me know that I was not to turn up. Those sorts of things hurt you a bit," Ed reflected.





# VOX POP

## Darren Grevis-James



### How long have you been a Rotarian?

I joined Yarra Bend Rotary in October 2014 following two visits to club dinner meetings.

### What's your favourite club role you have held in rotary?

My first and current role is Club Service Director. It's very challenging with a wide range portfolio that keeps me busy.

### What are you working on right now?

The introduction of our new magazine style publication YBR that we will issue at the end of each month. This will feature articles by our members, and profiles of the great work that Yarra Bend Rotary does in the community. Our objective is to circulate this to a wide and diverse readership.

### What's your favourite project that you have worked on?

Due to me being a relatively new member of Rotary I have not had an opportunity to work on major projects as yet, but to date I have just enjoyed doing the little things like helping out at on landscape work a Kew High School, and at last year's Rotary Youth Leadership Camp at Mount Evelyn.

### What are you excited about working on next?

Building membership of our club. We have a number of ideas that we think will attract more people to join Yarra Bend this year.

## Kew High School - tribute to ANZACs

Several of our members attended a special Anzac service this year at Kew High School at which President Justin Wibrow, and Vietnam veteran, Ed Brown laid wreaths on behalf of Yarra bend Rotary.

The service held in-doors was attended by hundreds of students and teachers and featured the Kew High School Band and choir who performed the Australian national anthem

Other Yarra Bend members who attended the service were past President Tony Boyd, Treasurer John Pocock, and Youth program coordinator - Anne Brown.

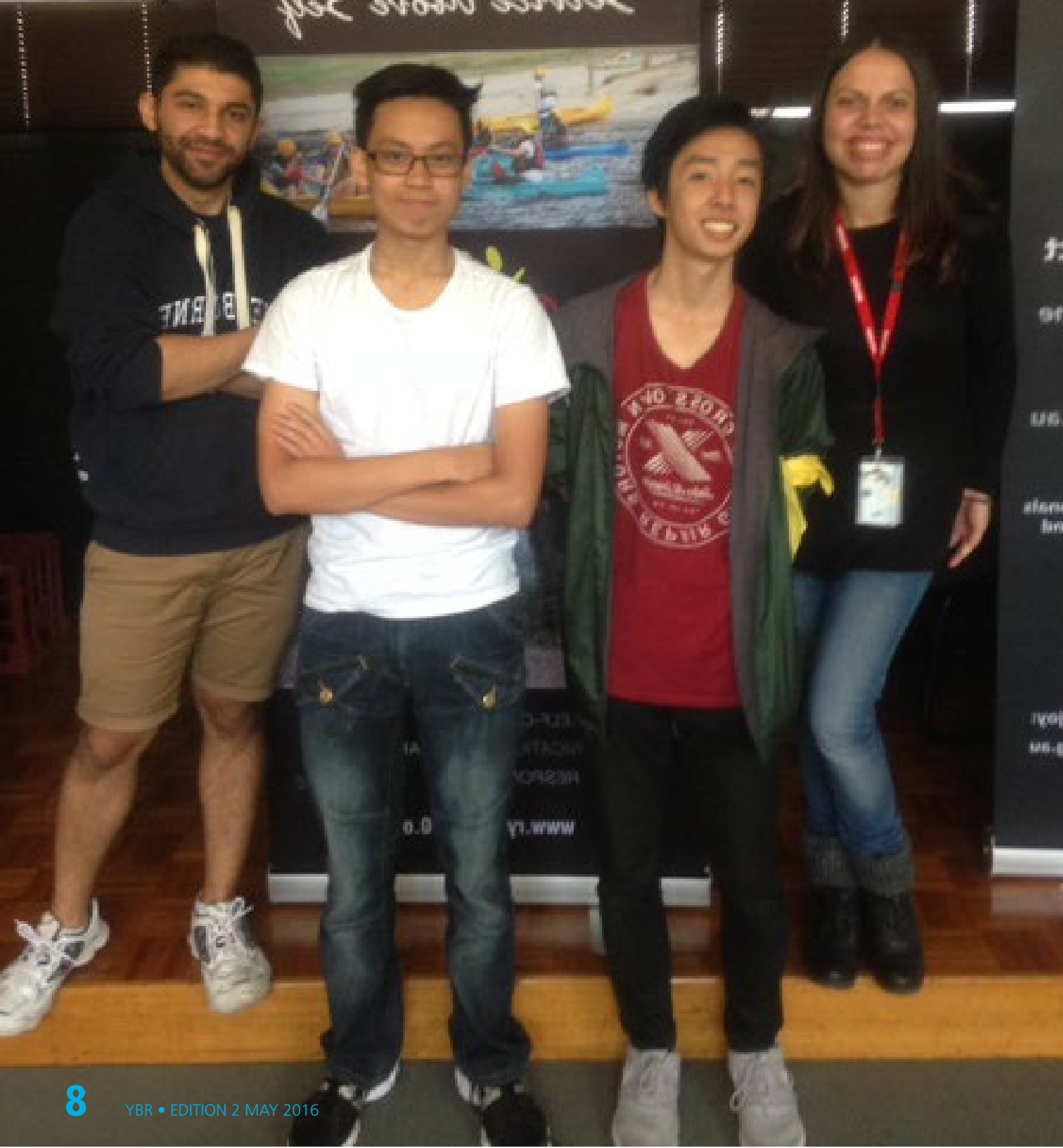
The Yarra Bend Rotary wreaths were later laid outside beneath the Australian flag. In recent times, the club led by the efforts of Ed Brown has done a series of garden landscape and beautification works around Kew High School. Yarra Bend has enjoyed a strong relationship with the school over the past three years and provided an annual bursary of \$3000 to assist students in need of additional resources for school.



Ed brown with Kew High School Captains Tiger Hongsmung, and Josephine Lake



# RYPEN



The Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment (RYPEN) is a Rotary sponsored District New Generations program. Year ten and eleven students, from schools across District 9800 attend a weekend long camp designed at developing their potential through a mixture of lecture style sessions and adventure-based learning.

RYPEN helps to develop leadership and social awareness skills like: resilience, teamwork, clear values, communication and global citizenship. The program is a weekend of seminars and fun activities, run by young people.

Yarra Bend Rotary recently sponsored Victor Nyuyen and Kevin Nyuyen from Kew High School and they attended the March 2016 weekend at Camp Doxa Malmesbury near Drummond

Both lads said it was a great experience. Kevin said the RYPEN camp encourages participants to move outside their comfort zone. Victor was also enthusiastic about RYPEN who said the development of working within a team is just one of the many good outcomes of attending the camp.



At a RYPEN camp, young people engage in a series of ideas, problems and social experiences which will assist them in forming their own values and moral standards. It helps to develop leadership and social awareness skills. Students are encouraged to learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively.

The camp ocuses on a range of practices including: recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively, and developing leadership skills.

RYPEN is organised by a committee of Rotarians, experienced business professionals, and Rotaractors, aspiring business leaders, and facilitated over the weekend by both Rotarians and a team of youth leaders who are or have been involved in other Youth Training Programs





# First Associate Member Inducted

## President's induction of our first associate member

Liz Rodriguez, the Board of Yarra Bend Rotary has unanimously voted to induct you as their first Associate Member. They firmly believe, you possess the qualities of leadership and the personal characteristics which exemplify the true spirit of Rotary in your public, business, social and private life.

Our members accept you will diligently serve the club, your vocation and the community, upholding the Rotary International focus on global understanding, goodwill and peace.

We are confident you will be judged kindly by the example you will display through your community service and the manner in which you will strengthen the character of the Yarra Bend Rotary Club.

It is my privilege to induct you as an Associate Members of Yarra Bend Rotary and ask members to display their welcome to you.



**Liz Rodriguez Alaya, an Academic Advisor & Advocate at Swinburne Student Amenities Association was nominated by Yarra Bend Rotary's - Secretary, David Shave.**

Yarra Bend Rotary recently introduced new membership categories that offer people flexibility to participate actively or occasionally in a range of local and international community support programs.

The three categories now available are: - Associate membership, Business membership, and Full membership.

Yarra Bend Rotary President, Justin Wibrow said the Associate membership option is an easy way for people to be part of club activities on an occasional basis and at a lower cost than full membership.

*"An Associate member might want to help out at an activity like our 'Rotarians at Work Day' or join us in helping out at the Servants Community house in Hawthorn where the vulnerable and needy live in a*

*safe environment with relative comfort."*

Justin said Yarra bend Rotary is active with the Boroondara Cares group of Rotary Clubs who work for the good of people in Boroondara. "We also support organisations such as the Salvation Army and we have a special relationship with Kew High School, where we help with the maintenance of their gardens, and provide a bursary to assist underprivileged students to participate in their school programs," Justin added.

Yarra Bend Rotary is also involved in a range of wider Rotary programs that support youth with leadership development, international exchange, science experience, and mentoring young people in developing their education and careers.

If you're interested to learn more about Yarra Bend Rotary and what we achieve, contact us directly and we can tell you more about our projects and how you can make a valuable contribution to the community.





# ROTARIANS AT WORK

BY BOB LAMBERT



Saturday 16th April 2016 was designated the Rotary at Work Day for the Boroondara Cares group of Clubs. Our Club, Yarra Bend, took the lead and organised the clubs to do some serious clean-up work at two of the properties run by Servants Community Housing.

Servants Community Housing has been operating affordable accommodation and safe housing for those on low incomes for over a quarter of a century in Hawthorn, and more recently in Kew.

A strong contingent from our club worked at Carrical House and the remaining Clubs worked diligently at Hamer Hall.

Yarra Bend members took to cleaning the windows, stairs, banisters and floors of the old historic house that is home to about fifty vulnerable individuals—many of whom suffer from long-term mental illnesses, and where they can live in relative comfort.

CEO of Servants Community Housing, Matt Maudlin was delighted at the results we achieved at both centres and sent his sincere thanks.

It was good to see our club “out and about” on Community activities, doing some worthwhile work and enjoying good fellowship at the same time.



# Youth Exchange Subject of PhD Thesis

BY OLIVIER ELZINGRE

The thesis I am working on tackles issues of motivation and identity trajectories of students who participate in exchange programs to France at some point during their high school second language education.

It has often been said that going abroad is the most efficient way to learn a second language, and although there is some truth to this, it has been clearly shown that outcomes from an exchange can be extremely varied. Particularly, there can no guarantee that students will necessarily improve in their language skills, and outcomes also go far beyond linguistic acquisition. It is therefore very difficult to predict the outcomes of an exchange.

While predictions are difficult to make, it is almost certain that there will be an outcome. Practically, I interview students who tell me stories and anecdotes of how their language classes were before going to France, what motivated them to participate in an exchange, what happened there and how they felt when they came back. Through these narratives, I interpret, with the student's collaboration, how their identity shifted across an 18 months to 2 year period.

The paper I am working on the side is a pilot study aimed at informing my PhD research.

This paper is therefore a simplified or more manageable project with similar goals as my thesis. In this paper, Sylvan (non de plume), a 17 year old boy from Canberra, went to France for 2 months. A bright and academic student, as well as mature and very sociable, Sylvan took full advantage of his experience abroad. He achieved all his goals and more: linguistically, personally and culturally.

Naturally the success of his exchange should be celebrated. The biggest challenge were related to his unpreparedness for certain personal outcomes. Sylvan matured into an independent young man, who nevertheless still had to attend a fairly strict school. In addition, his family hadn't expected the extent of Sylvan's transformation. As a consequence, neither his school nor his parents understood the shifts in Sylvan's identity and had assumed he would pick up where he left off.

My thoughts upon hearing Sylvan's story were that there are aspects of his preparation, support overseas and upon his return that would have needed to be addressed. I would suggest that preparations before departure have to cover not only aspects of culture shock, but also the possible impact of immersing oneself in a foreign culture. Parents and teachers also should be made aware of that they may well find their child or student very much changed. It is their duty to accept and help the returnee reacclimatise, not force their assumptions onto them. Also, exchange students should be made ready to speak up when things go wrong. Through dialogue most situations can be resolved.

I would like to propose an online platform that would allow communication between parents, host parents, exchange providers teachers and teachers. The platform would be entirely open allowing for any concerns to be voiced and for responsibilities to be shared.







# Patrick to coordinate January National Youth Science Forum

BY JANE STOTT



Yarra Bend's latest sponsored student for the Rotary National Youth Science Forum, Patrick Jacobs who came back to a club dinner meeting recently to tell members about his experience at the Forum In Canberra has been given some great news by the programs organisers.

He's been selected as the student staff member (Staffie) for the next NYSF program. There were only 14 out of 200 chosen from his group.



Selection as a Staffie is an elite appointment; they totally run the whole program. Patrick will attend training prior to January next year including a week long camping/hiking trip in July prior to the start of the Forum in January 2017

His next step is to focus on his school work but to include balance. He has signed up for the basketball team and has already won their first game.



Patrick is now considering a double degree in Commerce and Science or even medicine. The program had a pretty big influence on him and he is now more open to ideas, he does not want to be stuck in a lab all day, he likes field and practical work

and loves helping people

The camp took part in Jan 2016 at ANU in Canberra and is for students in year 11 going into year 12. Specifically for students who are passionate about science and not just at grade card level. There were National and International students there including from South Africa, Germany and New Zealand and he is happy to now have friends all over Australia.

Patrick learnt about how science is being used in business and universities today. They went on lab visits with the physics group, saw heavy meteorite rocks, and went to the physics department at ANU where he saw how they are shooting plasma into atoms to see what happens. They had robotics fights in the Robotics Lab (Patrick's robot won!).

Patrick was highly appreciative of seeing other aspects of science and learning that study vs partying was going to be vital to his success in year 12.

He has now realised that a science career does not necessarily mean being stuck in a lab all day and that there are plenty of opportunities in business.



## Patrick's mother - Jacqueline Carmichael wrote this recent letter to Yarra Bend Rotary

Good Afternoon,

As an expression of gratitude for your support in the NYSF, my son Patrick spoke at your meeting last night in Richmond. I understand your club's interest in hearing from him, learning what he gleaned from the experience and gaining an insight as to the type of young man your club has been supporting. I feel Patrick did well with his presentation and as his mother I know how he feels about his experience at the NYSF.

I thought you and your members might be interested in the parents' perspective. I want every Yarra Bend Rotarian to know how much your support has changed Patrick's outlook on life and what he might do with it.

While Patrick was in Canberra he phoned me and had a 42 minute conversation with me. That is the longest phone call I have ever had with my son - probably the longest non-stop conversation I have ever had with my son!

He was so enthusiastic, he was moved, excited, interested, fully engaged and full of optimism about what he was learning and what his future might hold. He described all the different areas of interest he had developed and where this might take him. We spoke about his future and he told me his life goal is to do something for the world. He told me that he doesn't need his name to be remembered but he wants people to say "Yeah that was a good thing". He told me he wants to change the world. That was a big moment for me as a parent to hear him say that. In fact it was somewhat overwhelming, I certainly did not have such thoughts as a teenager and it makes me very aware of how I must nurture his gifts and talents, guide him, support and encourage him.

This is where Rotary comes in - it does take a village to raise a child and since Patrick was initially introduced to Yarra Bend Rotary through RYPEN, Anne has worked very hard to ensure Patrick has every opportunity to thrive - she is in our village and through the sponsorship and support, the entire Yarra Bend Rotary Club is in our village. I just want you to know that your generosity is greatly appreciated and as a parent I am truly grateful of the interest you have shown in supporting and developing my son.

Patrick is so excited to have been selected to be a staff member at one of the January sessions, and again this is a result of his experience, his enthusiasm and his ability to connect with people. Anne has explained to me what an honour it is to be selected, so as you can imagine I am so pleased for Patrick.

Patrick is an exceptional young man, you can see it and people feel it; via your support in these key development events Rotary has been a contributor to his success, and I must say a heartfelt thank you.

With my Kindest Regards,

Jacqueline Carmichael

# ENGINEER. FATHER. HOMELESSNESS FIGHTER.

Yarra Bend Rotary achieves great outcomes for the community.

We're an inclusive, diverse, friendly, progressive and well organised community service club that supports a wide range of local, national, and international programs that support youth development, care of the environment, and provide direct assistance to combat homelessness and hunger, the eradication of disease, and fast response to disaster relief.

We also serve the needs of those in our Boroondara Community whose circumstances have led them to require additional assistance.

If you're interested in doing something of real and direct value for local and international communities then Yarra Bend Rotary may be the organisation that is right for you.

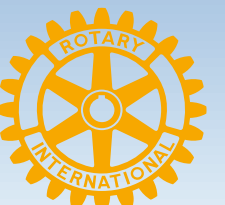
Our club has three membership offerings:

- Full membership
- Business/Corporate membership
- Associate membership

Contact us we'd love to meet you and show you what we do and how we operate.

We meet every Wednesday over dinner at the Amora Hotel 649 Bridge Road Richmond at 6:30 p.m. for 7:00p.m. Just call David Shave on 9822 3750, or 0408 511 615 to let him know you will be joining us. If you need to contact us by mail, our Mailing Address is P.O. Box 271, Kew East, Victoria, 3102 or e-mail [yarrabend@rotarydistrict9800.org](mailto:yarrabend@rotarydistrict9800.org)

Yarra Bend  
**Rotary**





# Bright Future Community Centre

BY ISABEL ARMER



**The Bright Future Community Centre is located on the outskirts of Kathmandu, Nepal, and is the major international project for the Rotary Club of Yarra Bend. It is now managed by a local man, Netra Basnet, who pays school fees, monitors the welfare of families and manages all maintenance of the project and its extensions. The children love him and affectionately call him uncle.**

The Centre has grown from small beginnings in 2003 with about a dozen small, shy children in one room, to over 70 students in four rooms. It is testament to how well Rotary can work with the local community to make a difference to the lives of children and their families.

Morning sessions are run by three young ladies, who were part of the original group in

2003. They now attend tertiary institutes and have gathered some friends to help in BFCC. In 2015 they started an evening homework class, which was soon full of kindergarten children. It is a clear demonstration how much education is valued by parents in Kopan and how education has enabled these young girls to have the confidence to develop their own projects.

In 2005 the Rotary Club of Yarra Bend extended BFCC to establish a computer school in a separate building. It provides support for a laptop lab in BFCC and schools in Kangel (Solukhumbu in Eastern Nepal). Skype is very useful for BFCC because we were able to link to the Rotary Club of Yarra Bend and link to schools in Poland, Latvia, Australia and Utah





The sewing school, established in 2011, provided local women with a skill and enabled many to establish their own small business. When Days for Girls was introduced to Nepal in 2014 these ladies had the skills to immediately start producing kits. One of the Kopan ladies helped teach and distribute the kits to the girls in the main school in Kangel; a very proud achievement for a low caste, uneducated woman.

These women have also organized a knitting group which produces socks and gloves which can be sold in Australia for a fair price and the profit is returned to the women. Yarra Bend is playing a key role in empowering the women in Kopan.

Kangel is a small district in the south of

Solukhumbu. It is a poor, subsistence farming area, remote from the tourist trail. Many of the families in Kopan moved from Kangel, hoping for a better life, but without work and family connections, many slid into abject poverty. Most live in one rented room in a large house and struggle to survive.

Our aim is to improve education and health in Kangel so children have the skills to cope in the modern world and are not duped into the sex trade or exploited on building sites overseas. Hopefully some will remain as leaders in the community.

Our close links with Netra Basnet and the local community meant we were able to distribute help to earthquake victims in Kopan and Kangel, when and where it was needed a few days after the quakes. It has taken the Government



almost a year to start spending the money to help the people. Yarra Bend's swift action saved lives and helped rehouse people quickly. The Club funded a water filtration plant in Kopan, which supplies clean water to local families

One aim of our program at BFCC is to add enjoyment to education and expand horizons and that is why volunteers are so valuable. It is not necessary to teach a class. By talking to children you can improve their English and make them think about the world outside Kopan. They love to learn new skills so artists, musicians, photographers, scientists can make a difference in just one hour. It is so simple and so rewarding.

My friend, Teresa Williams, has been part of the program since the very early days. She runs a trekking company called 'Slow Trekking', which is designed to cater for older people. Those

trekkers who are prepared to face little children early in the morning leave BFCC with wonderful memories. Many continue to support the project by donating clothing or money and some return to revisit Nepal.

Apart from these donations most of the money for the running of the project is raised from sales of donated goods at Camberwell Market, so even if you cannot trek in Nepal, you can help the people in Nepal by donating your goods which you no longer need.

Yarra Bend's International project in Nepal is an example of an endeavor which continues to expand and give the people a means to help themselves and their country. It demonstrates how Rotary's network links people and ideas to improve the lives of people in poor and remote areas.





**Be a gift to the world**

**K.R. Ravindran**  
**2015-16 President**  
**Rotary International**

**Rotary** 

**Rotary International**  
**2015-16 President's Theme**

# Yarra Bend Rotary



Rotary Club of Yarra Bend  
ABN 97 325 138 640  
Chartered 16th June 1986 District 9800

PO Box 271  
Kew East, Vic 3102  
Australia

[yarrabend@rotarydistrict9800.org.au](mailto:yarrabend@rotarydistrict9800.org.au)  
[www.yarrabendrotary.com.au](http://www.yarrabendrotary.com.au)



You have received this issue of the Yarra Bend Rotary Club Bulletin because you are a member or have had previous association with the Rotary Club of Yarra Bend Inc. (ABN 97 325 138 640), a Rotary Club in District 9800, or because you have chosen to become a subscriber. If you no longer wish to receive the Yarra Bend Rotary Club Bulletin, please click [here](#) to email Yarra Bend Rotary's Club Protection and Privacy Officer, who will remove your name from the Bulletin distribution list on request.

If you wish to contact the Bulletin editor, please click [here](#) to send an email to the editor.

We take your right to privacy seriously. We will not disclose any of your personal information to any third party other than in accordance with our Privacy Policy