

HORIZONS

Greater Blue Mountains Rotary

Rotary District 9685- Australia

May/June, 2026

50 Years of Rotary Service



Congratulations

David Clark, formerly Blackheath Rotary, now a member of Rotary Nomads, and
John Rankins OAM, Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise
Charter Members of Central Blue Mountains Rotary Club - 22 May, 1976

Comin' up

Stuff you should know about

Greater Blue Mountains

Rotary



<https://greaterbluemountainsrotaryclub.org.au>

Welcome



As we hurtle towards the end of the Rotary Year there is no time to slow down, as we are getting busier with more events happening across the mountains.

On 7 June, we are hosting a fundraising "Lunch for Lasting Change" at Blackheath Golf and Community Club.

There will be a fantastic Sri Lankan menu by the great people at Spikes Brasserie, also raffles, and a silent auction. Booking information on Page 4.

Later, our club changeover will be 20 June at the Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls. See page 11.

The district changeover will be the following weekend on 27 June.

Our collaboration with Mountain High Pies was an enormous success. The special "Surf 'n Turf" Rotary pie sold out by 1.00pm.

I want to thank Mike, Damien, and the team who enthusiastically embraced this new joint venture.

Thanks to the club members who spent the day not only spruiking the virtues of the "Rotary Pie", but spread the word about Rotary and Australian Rotary Health.

Mike (MHP) and I are hoping to make this type of collaboration a twice-yearly event.

The Pride of Workmanship event took place on 19 May at Katoomba RSL Club. Congratulations to all the worthy recipients.

As the end of the fiscal year fast approaches, now is the time to make your fully tax-deductible contribution to The Rotary Foundation. Remember, the foundation can only provide funds to distribute (via grants) to local and overseas projects if we, Rotary members, support it.

Finally, get involved. Ask your friends and neighbours to join us, and together we, as people of action, can help to improve the lives of people not only in the Blue Mountains but across the globe.

Barry Taylor

President 2025-2026



Wreath from Greater Blue Mountains Rotary Club placed on the Anzac Memorial, Wentworth Falls - 25 April, 2026.

Did You Know!

Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise Rotary Club is 25 years old...Chartered 6 June, 2001.

In a newsletter after the charter dinner, on 22 June, 2001, president Rob Quadling wrote:

"Wow! What a great launch."

"More than 140 Rotarians, partners and friends to get us underway.

I felt extremely proud to represent all of you in receiving the charter from DG David Croft and all the generous gifts from Rotary clubs throughout the district and beyond.

Many of the presents on display will help us on the way to becoming a real Rotary club.

Now, we have to get on with the job of planning and activating the Rotary Club of Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise."

The Skyway Brasserie was packed with Rotarians from 12 different clubs. Blackheath, Burwood, Central Blue Mountains, Holroyd, Katoomba, Lithgow, Liverpool West, Lower Blue Mountains, Nepean, Penrith South, Springwood and Wahroonga.

The formation of Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise Rotary was a project of Central Blue Mountains and Blackheath Rotary Clubs.

Hey!

WE'RE BUYING A SPINNER

Greater Blue Mountains Rotary is working with Blue Mountains City Council, as part of a substantial upgrade of the children's playground area, at Melrose Park, North Katoomba.

Club President Barry Taylor says we are donating an Accessible Spinner, at a cost of \$30,000, including installation.

"Our target is \$15,000, with a matching RAWCS grant.

The spinner will be an attractive addition to the new playground, allowing wheelchair users access to an exciting piece of equipment.

Our accessible spinner is a tangible asset, a physical item with value. We expect it will provide benefit for many years to children who use a wheelchair, or might otherwise be restricted from enjoying an opportunity to have fun in a park."

The spinner is low maintenance and long lasting.

Its stainless steel and powder-coated construction has an anti-skid deck and smooth rotating edge surfaces for maximum safety.

The handle, as well as being designed especially for wheelchair users, allows room for another person on the rotating platform.

Dan Long, Manager Open Space and Recreation, Blue Mountains City Council, says skilled contractors have been engaged to undertake the park upgrade.

The project is expected to be completed by the end of June, although this may spill over to July/August, subject to weather conditions and other delays.

The spinner is being purchased from Moduplay Group Pty Ltd, Unanderra NSW, a leading provider of playground equipment for schools, parks, and community spaces.

Dan Long says the playground area upgrade will deliver more variety, while retaining the park's natural character, with a mix of slides, climbing and balancing elements, imaginative play and nature-based materials.

Well-used features such as the existing swing set have been retained, and accessibility has been improved with smoother surfaces and an accessible parking space.

A small Multi Use Games Area including basketball, netball and soccer has also been included for informal practice.

Our accessible spinner is a tangible asset, a physical item with value. We expect it will provide benefit for many years to children who use a wheelchair, or might otherwise be restricted from enjoying an opportunity to have fun in a park.



Image supplied: similar spinner installed in a park at Mt. Victoria

DONATE NOW

[www://directory.rawcs.com.au/56-2025-26](http://directory.rawcs.com.au/56-2025-26)

Join us for an exceptional *Sri Lankan* **BUFFET LUNCH**

vibrant, spicy, and coconut-rich cuisine

Greater Blue Mountains

Rotary



Our mouth-watering 21-dish menu includes delicious starters, curries, vegetables, staples, desserts, and Ceylon Tea
Drinks at bar prices



Blackheath Golf Club

Brightlands Ave, Blackheath

Sunday, 7 June from 12:00 for 12:30

King's Birthday long weekend

There's always a good reason

We are raising money to install an Accessible Spinner in the children's playground area at Melrose Park, North Katoomba for children who use a wheelchair, or might otherwise be unable to enjoy fun in a park. We'll also be sharing some of the proceeds with our Sustainable Lanka project



Lucky Door Prize
Silent Auction

BOOK NOW:

<https://www.trybooking.com/DLSNR> or scan the QR Code. \$65 each, or \$600 for a table of 10



Katoomba High School represented at World Model United Nations

Story source:

Katoomba High School newsletter

Term 1 - Week 10

images supplied

Katoomba High School 2025 Graduates, Malia Khoo and Emeisha Vilder, described sitting in the UN General Assembly as “surreal” and something they had dreamed of since 2023, their first Model UN competition in Year 10.

They were participating in the World International Model United Nations (WIMUN) in New York, in February, 2026.

It was an opportunity they accepted, following their win in the Rotary Western Sydney Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA) in 2025, with fellow Graduate Miette Hoekstra.

Malia and Emeisha shared their New York experience with members of Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise Rotary at a breakfast meeting, on 24 March, 2026.

“Back in Year 10, we started Model UN, thinking ‘oh this would be fun to try out’.

Although we were good at debating, and enjoyed it, we never expected to be able to sit in the General Assembly and debate against people from all over the world.”

Malia and Emeisha said they thoroughly enjoyed debating in New York, and are now looking forward to university in July, where they will study a double degree in Law and International Studies.

WIMUN also provided them with an opportunity to make friends from all over the world.

They explored New York with their new friend group that consisted of people from the Czech Republic, Melbourne, and Mexico, and they visited UN Headquarters for the opening and closing ceremonies of the competition.

Rotary Clubs of Lower Blue Mountains and Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise assisted by donating funds to help support Malia and Emeisha’s participation at WIMUN, in New York, this year.

Thanks to a generous grant from Bendigo Bank, Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise Rotary was able to help support Malia and Emeisha’s attendance at WIMUN, and sponsor two teams from Katoomba High School at the 2025 Western Sydney MUNA.

Katoomba High School registered two teams for this year’s Western Sydney MUNA, at Nepean CAPA High School, May 23-24.

Katoomba High School is grateful for Rotary’s ongoing support of its students, school and community.



Garden Gnomes and Selfies for End Polio

It all happens at Easter when gnomes come out of hiding and visitors arrive to enjoy the Rhododendron Gardens at Blackheath.

Gnome Master, Dave Clark PHF, who lives at Lithgow, says he has one of the largest privately-owned collections of garden gnomes in Australia.

“Just over 2,500, when I stopped counting,” he added.

“With the help of volunteers, we spend about eight hours setting up our little friends for thousands of visitors who enjoy the Rhododendron Gardens over Easter Saturday and Sunday.

Well-known ABC Gardening Australia host, Costa Georgiadis, always arrives. Known as the ‘live garden gnome’ he entertains the visitors most of the day.

He wanders through the garden, talking about the history of gnomes, where the gnomes in his collection come from, and, of course, everyone wants a selfie.

It’s a great way to raise money for Rotary’s End Polio project and tell people about the good Rotary does in the world.

Every year, I grow my beard for the Gnome Convention. It takes about a year to get it to the stage you see in the photo, then I shave it off and start again.

This year, the Nomads wanted to see me shave it off, live on camera, at our first zoom meeting after Easter.

They each paid \$10 into our End Polio campaign fund, contributing \$360 for the Big Shave.”

Dave Clark has been serving Rotary for 56 years, having joined the Rotaract club of Katoomba in June 1970. It was his 17th birthday.

Over the years, he’s been a member of several clubs, participated in overseas activities, been a president more than once, a district governor, and now he’s a member of the E-club of Australian Rotary Nomads.

Based in District 9620, the Nomads boast about 675 members across Australia. They have regular meetings on Zoom, when members are at home, in their vans, or mobile homes. Wherever they are, whenever they can, they log on.

The Rotary Nomads motto is “Helping Hands Across the Land”.

“we run projects anywhere in Australia which directly or indirectly support community members in need,” Dave said.



“everyone wants a selfie”

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Images supplied

50 years of Rotary Service Congratulations John Rankins OAM

**Member, Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise Rotary,
Charter Member and former President of Central
Blue Mountains Rotary - Paul Harris Fellow.**

John was recognised in the New Year's Honour list issued on Australia Day, 2017 for service to the community of the Blue Mountains.

His service also includes:

Volunteer, Greater Blue Mountains Food and Wine Advisory Group, since 2013.

Volunteer, WorldSkills Australia, since 2004.

Member, Rotary Club of the Upper Blue Mountains, since 2003.

Head Teacher Hospitality, TAFE NSW, Western Sydney Institute, 2010 and cookery teacher, 1996-2010.

Charter Member, Rotary Club Central Blue Mountains, 1976-2002. President 1983-84

Volunteer Board Member, Blue Mountains Villages Ltd, 2016.

Commonwealth of Australia Polar Medal (Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition Mawson 1966)

NSW Department of Education

Service Medal 2015

TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute

Recognition Award 2014 for Productive Partnerships and Collaborative Practices



Breakfast at Upper Blue

Katoomba High School's Student Leadership Team were guests of Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise at a breakfast meeting, May 12.

They spoke about their leadership roles and experiences at Katoomba High and their future career aspirations.

Vice Captain Mars Fraser told about his experience at the National Youth Science Forum (NYSF) in Brisbane, in January this year.

He thanked Rotary for helping to fund his participation at this excellent science program.... Image: David Wallace



L to R: Jenny Hartnett Joint Pres., Vice Captain Mars Fraser, Principal Tess Devine, Prefects Tilda Horne, and Ruby Loeb, School Captain Tess Rogan, Youth Director Sandra de Gruchy.

In Case You Missed It

Delicious Event

Greater Blue Mountains scrumptious Rotary Pies were selling like hot cakes on May 16, at Mountain High Pies, Wentworth Falls.



Every pie sold made a difference

It was a special one-day event with proceeds from the sale of Rotary pies supporting local community projects, Australian Rotary Health, and our regular NSW Foodbank program.

Mountain High Pies baked a special Surf 'n Turf pie for the occasion.

All the pies were sold, and we have booked a date next year to repeat the activity.



Images supplied

go for it

THE
PUSH_{UP}
CHALLENGE

Pushups raising money for Hearspace, Katoomba

June 3 - 26, 2026

Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise is asking Rotarians and their friends to get fit, join the fun, do some pushups, and raise money for Hearspace, Katoomba.

Past President Bill Pixton says: "We would like to have as many Rotarians, friends of Rotary or anybody else to take part."

Hearspace Katoomba offers people aged 12 to 25 a welcoming environment where they can access free and confidential mental health support, as well as support with work and study, alcohol and/or other drugs.



For more information or to make a donation to our team:

<https://www.thepushupchallenge.com.au/fundraiser/Bilby75> or contact Bill Pixton- bpixton2@gmail.com

Epic Day of Service

Rotary South Pacific reports that Rotary's Epic Day of Service, May 16, was a huge success.

Across the South Pacific, 99 clubs from 15 districts took part, delivering more than 75 projects with the support of over 200 community volunteers.

Each project responded to local challenges, but together they showed what is possible when clubs work with their communities in a shared effort.

Here in the BM, Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise and the E-Club of Greater Sydney completed a mammoth task, clearing rubbish and vegetation from at house at Winmalee.

With cooperation from Blue Mountains City Council and local Police, club members were able to clear three large skips of rubbish and garbage bins.

Rotary South Pacific Service Programs and Projects Director, Amanda Barnes, says the Epic day of Service is never about asking clubs to do more than they were already doing,

It is about leveraging the amazing work already happening in our clubs, adding a focus on bringing in our communities and activating on the same day for collective impact.



Rotary Clubs of New South Wales  **mherv**
men's health education rotary van
saving lives in regional australia

FREE men's health checks!

At Katoomba



Most blokes don't pay much attention to their health - but treatable high blood pressure and diabetes often go unnoticed, until it is too late

Get Checked - See MHERV - It's a gift

MHERV will be at Katoomba RSL carpark on Wednesday and Thursday
June 10 and 11 between 0900 and 16.15....DO IT!

Changeover Lunch at “The View”



Saturday, 20 June, 2026
Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls
12 Noon for 12.30

Greater Blue Mountains

Rotary



Celebrate our successful first year with President Barry Taylor
and welcome Past District Governor Mina Howard,
our President for 2026-2027

Order your meal from the menu
and pay for it when you arrive
Drinks at Bar Prices

Because the meal is à la carte, we need to know
how many people are coming. So, please use the
link <https://www.trybooking.com/DMNHZ>
or the QR code to register your attendance



Sherlie Does FoodBank

Sherlie McMillan has delivered more food to Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre, sourced from NSW FoodBank, at Glendenning.

Greater Blue Mountains Rotary teams do regular trips to FoodBank to help alleviate food insecurity in the Upper Mountains.

Its great to work with our local Neighbourhood Centres who do a wonderful job in our communities.

This is a voluntary activity at each Rotarian's own cost for petrol and associated expenses, that come with a 150km round trip.

That's what Rotarians do, to try and make life better for those doing it tough.



Rotary International Jug ONE OF ITS KIND

A cherished item of pottery created by Grace Seccombe, artist/potter (1880-1956).

It sold at auction on 21.11.2004 for \$1,000.

Believed to be her last known piece, the jug is 8cm high and 16cm long, in perfect condition.

It's just one of several thousand pottery pieces created by Grace Seccombe using a small gas furnace and a brick kiln, in her backyard studio at Eastwood NSW, from 1930 until mid 1950.

Her high-quality signed pieces are eagerly sought by collectors from all over the world.

Golfing exploits of Ray and Twiggy

This photograph, taken recently at Blackheath Golf Course, depicts Raymond John Wiles, golfer extraordinaire, and his faithful caddy of many years, Paul Twigg.

It is said that Ray played many matches with Twiggy toting his bag, and, to this day, remains undefeated.

When questioned about the frugal nature of his equipment, he was quick to reply, 'why use more equipment than you need'.

Ray's equipment consists of a trusty driving iron, which he is proudly holding, an ancient mashie niblick (c.1890–1920) which never let him down on his approach shots, and, of course, his trusty putter, affectionately named, 'Excalibur'.

The extremely lightweight golf bag, also from the 1920s, was handcrafted, and has certainly stood the test of time.

We look forward to more of Ray's 'tales from the locker room' at future lunches.



...Phill Isaacs