

# HORIZONS

Rotary District 9685- Australia

September - October, 2026



## Megalong Valley Community Water and Fire Resilience

Megalong Valley: Beautiful today but, with only a single narrow entry road from Blackheath and a lack of water available for firefighting, residents, visitors, and commercial enterprises could be placed at substantial risk from large bushfires.

According to local authorities, installing a large water storage facility in an accessible place would be a welcomed asset, providing a more efficient firefighting capability to protect the valley from threats to human life, extensive property destruction, and severe environmental damage.

..... Greater Blue Mountains Rotary has a proposal...see page 3.

Comin' up

## Stuff you should know about

<https://greaterbluemountainsrotaryclub.org.au>

## Welcome



### **Greetings everyone,**

I want to thank all our members who continue to contribute so much of their personal time to our club activities.

Whether it is out and about in the community or working behind the scenes, everyone plays a part in keeping the wheels turning.

We continue to make two trips each month to Foodbank to help ease the daily living costs for those in need.

I would like to acknowledge the generous financial support of Katoomba RSL, which helps us fund this important community service.

Our Lawson school breakfasts continue each Friday morning, led by Lora Stopic and her team of dedicated volunteers.

The Accessible Spinner has now been installed at Melrose Park, and there will be a media event soon to celebrate the completion of the playground and our contribution towards creating an inclusive space accessible to all children.

By far, the most exciting event coming up is the official opening of the ABCD (Association of Bell, Clarence and Dargan) Community Hall on 17 October.

This is a wonderful achievement on so many levels for this small community, which was devastated by bushfire in 2019.

Rotarians were there at an opportune time, met with the right people, selected the perfect project manager in Phill Isaacs OAM, and brought together the resources needed to kick-start the building project.

The residents have also contributed countless hours of hands-on work towards the construction and landscaping, while working together to prepare for the inevitable future bushfire events.

Together, we have built a strong and lasting connection between the community and Rotary.

We continue to work on the Global Grant for the Megalong Valley water tank. Greater Blue Mountains Rotary has pledged \$5000.

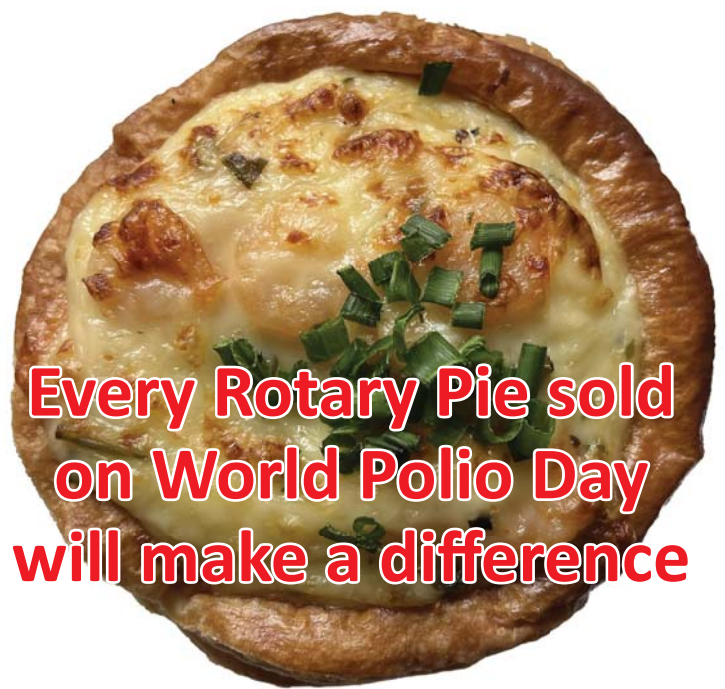
We need to raise another \$5000, and find an international sponsor who will contribute some of their Foundation funds.

Our Rotary Foundation Chair, PDG Niranjan Deodhar and DGE Haran Ramachandran are assisting in this very rigorous exercise.....see page 3.

October 24 is World Polio Day, and we will be promoting this important cause through our BBQs at Woolworths and Bunnings, as well as at Mountain High Pies, in Wentworth Falls.

We have been fortunate enough to have a special pie created for us, which will be sold on that day only....see page 6.

A portion of the proceeds will contribute towards the global effort to eradicate polio, which is now endemic in only two countries: Pakistan and Afghanistan.



**Every Rotary Pie sold  
on World Polio Day  
will make a difference**

Rotary began its fight against polio in 1979 with a project to immunise six million children in the Philippines.

Through its PolioPlus program, established in 1985, Rotary was the first organisation to have the vision of a polio-free world.

I would also like to congratulate Constable Robert Jinks, who is a finalist in the NSW Police Officer of the Year (POOTY) Awards.

Robert won the Community Service Award at our Blue Mountains POOTY event, and we wish him all the best for the upcoming awards.

We continue to fundraise to support our many projects, including Youth Service initiatives.

These include supporting a young student from Lithgow High School to attend the prestigious National Youth Science Forum (NYSF), sending a young person to the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), providing awards for Katoomba High School and Blackheath Primary School, and contributing to Youth Exchange activities.

Finally, we hope to install a number of defibrillators throughout the Upper Mountains, adding to the two that have already been installed, once we receive our District Grant.

Let's keep making a difference, one project at a time.

*Mina Howard*  
President  
2026-2927

# Rotary Firefighting Water Tank for Megalong Valley

Installing a large firefighting water tank in Megalong Valley would be a “no brainer”, according to local authorities.

It would provide a greater and more efficient capability for protection of the valley, its residents, and infrastructure.

The Rotary Club of Greater Blue Mountains together with Rotary District 9685 is seeking international partner clubs and districts to co-sponsor a Rotary Foundation Global Grant to deliver this essential firefighting resource.

In a substantial Global Grant Partnership Prospectus, written by Past District Governor Niranjan Deodhar, the project has been described as the installation of a 200,000 litre emergency firefighting water tank in an area providing easy access for fire trucks to refill.

The estimated cost of the project is \$98,707.

The proposed water tank would be installed at Megalong Valley Sportsground - a large, central site used already as a firefighting staging area, where it could be refilled using large water tankers.

Consultation has been underway since April 2024, with strong, documented community and agency support.

A spokesperson for Blue Mountains City Council says the installation of a large static water supply in Megalong Valley is a “no-brainer”.

Megalong Valley Community & Landholders Association has helped to confirm the suitable sportsground site.

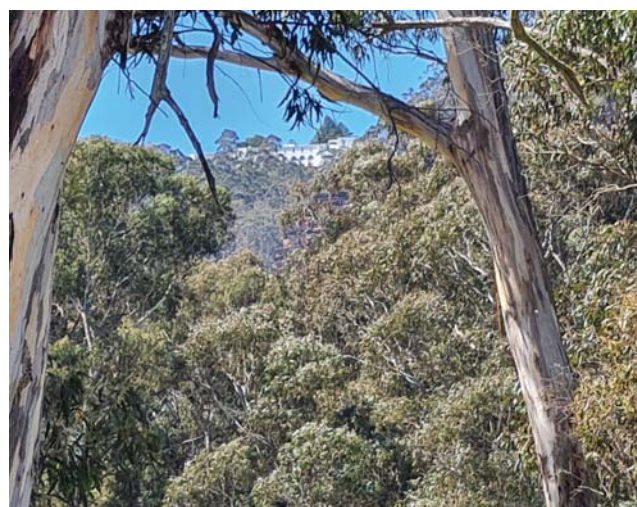
In a community assessment, Past District Governor and President of Greater Blue Mountains Rotary Club, Mina Howard, says “Initially, we met with Blue Mountains City Council and Blue Mountains District Rural Fire Service to determine if a large static water supply would be an asset. Both entities regarded it as being absolutely essential for the protection of the valley.

The proposed water tank will be a long-term community asset. Its strategic location will ensure that the infrastructure supports RFS operations into the future.

The project addresses an identified vulnerability in Megalong Valley emergency response arrangements, and will continue to provide benefits well beyond the initial grant period.

The investment will ensure that Megalong Valley is better prepared for increasingly challenging bushfire and severe weather conditions, and is better equipped to protect its residents, visitors, businesses and community assets.

Once installed, the water tank will become the property of Blue Mountains City Council. It will be maintained and serviced by the council and NSW Rural Fire Service.”



The world-famous Hydro Majestic Hotel sits above the valley on the ridgeline. It's an extremely vulnerable location should an out-of-control bushfire race up the cliffs.



*Images supplied*

Site of the proposed water tank on the eastern side of the community hall

Our teams visit FoodBank NSW every month, to collect and deliver packaged food and fresh vegetables to neighbourhood centres at Lawson, Katoomba and Blackheath.

**We always need help to continue this service.**

**Contact: [cantors@bigpond.com](mailto:cantors@bigpond.com) - Talk to Eric.**

# Become a FoodBanker

A huge thank you to Rotary for helping us keep fresh food available for our community.

This beautiful fruit and veg comes from FoodBank in Sydney, generously paid for and collected by our wonderful friends at Greater Blue Mountains Rotary.

Every contribution helps us keep good food moving through the Centre and into local households that can use it.

A big thank you to Rotary for generously making this possible.

*...Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre*



Mina Howard and Sherlie McMillan arriving at Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre with fresh veggies after a trip to FoodBank NSW

*Image supplied*

# Examining the Future

October 06, 2026

by Ian Scott AM

At the last Central Blue Spoke meeting in September, I ran a small quiz on what changes are coming up for the organisation of Rotary in our zone on 1 July 2028 and I would like to lay the three changes out here.

The first one is that our zone will be changing from Zone 8 to Zone 9A on 1 July 2028, with the countries remaining the same.

Zone 9B will include Brunei, China (Guangdong Province), Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Singapore.

So What?

The main impact is that it changes the frequency with which we can have an RI Director on the Board from our Zone, so you could say that our voice will be heard a little less.

It also diminishes our options for having a World President come from our region.

The second is that on that same date, clubs in our Zone will be reorganised into 10 new districts, down from the 19 we currently have (see maps).

So What?

Well, the most obvious is that we do not have enough Rotary members in our zone to warrant 19 districts.

This was the case before the Regionalisation Pilot started, but the RI Board approved putting redistricting on hold.

Once they approved an extension to the Pilot until - you guessed it - 30 June 2028, we could not hold the line on 19 districts as our membership growth has not been anywhere near that required to hold the line.

Less obvious is that our regional representation at the Council on Legislation, one rep per district, becomes less, so our influence in Rotary's Parliament is lessened.

The upside of redistricting is that we have districts with a lot more than the minimum 1100 members, giving us more resources to Grow Rotary.

And please remember, it is not RI, it is not Rotary South Pacific and it is not districts that Grow Rotary; it is the clubs that Grow Rotary!

All of the other bodies just provide the wherewithal for clubs to implement the Rotary Action Plan.

Looking into this further; it is club members, you and me, that Grow Rotary, so I hope we are ready to do so.

The last is that the Regionalisation Pilot will conclude.

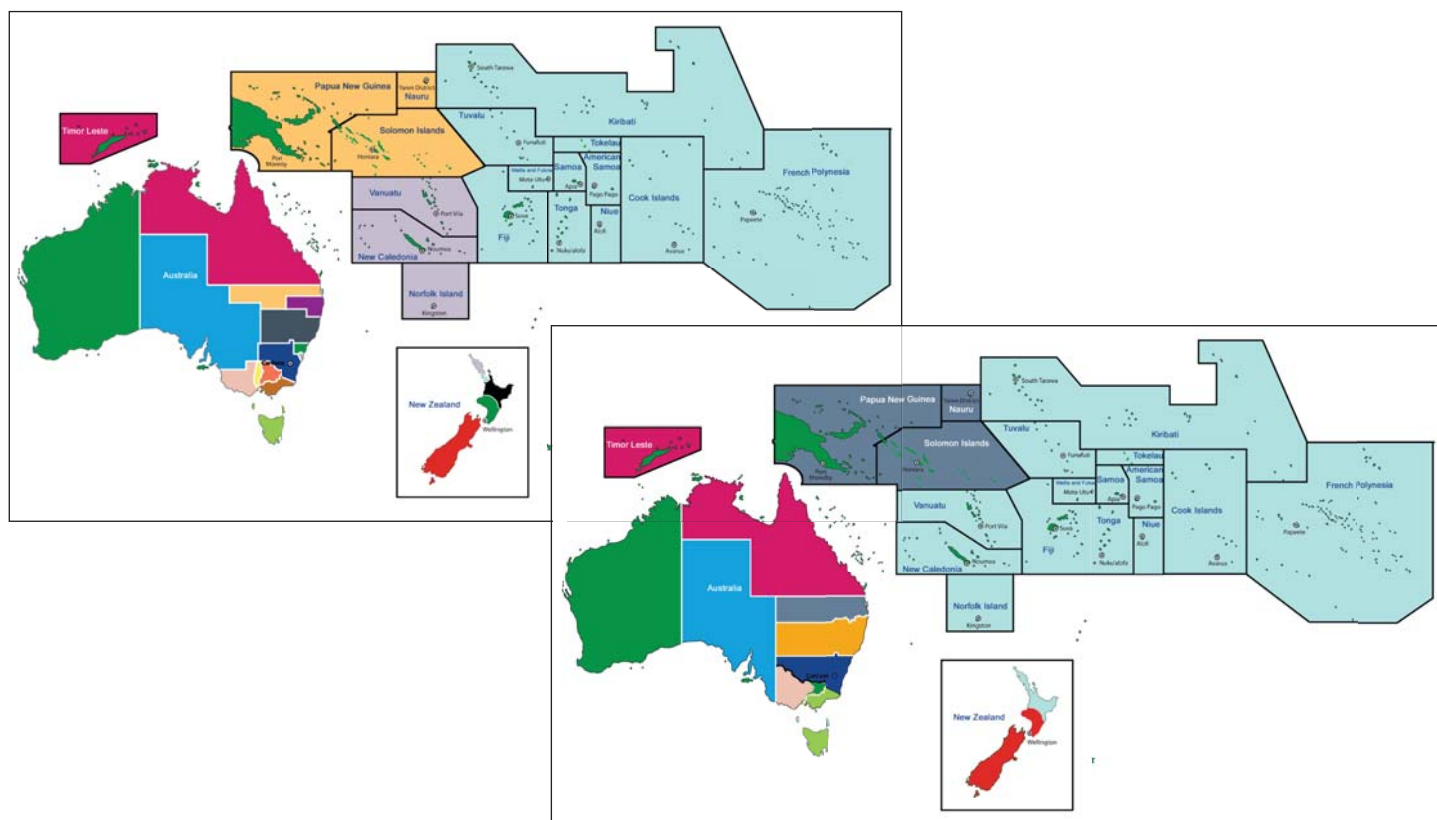
So What?

Pilot activities are for trying new things and new ways of doing business to see if they offer a better pathway for the future, so when this one ends, there will be a different Rotary future in our region.

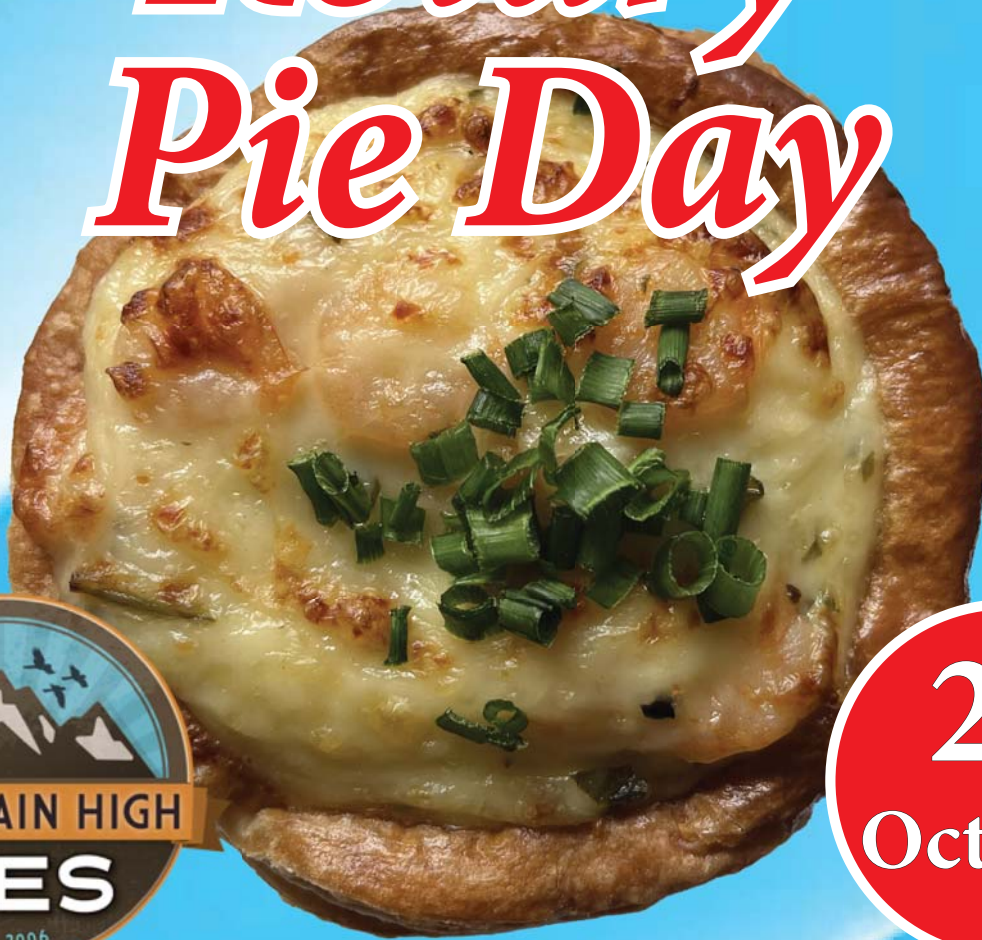
What the options are for that future are being thought about now, and I expect will be put out for consultation before the end of this year.

Will we have a regional board? What will support to clubs look like? Who delivers it? How will districts manage the larger geography and member numbers? These questions and more, like the impact of Artificial Intelligence, will be taxing a few brains in the months to come.

What these matters show us is that our organisation is preparing well for our next century of service.

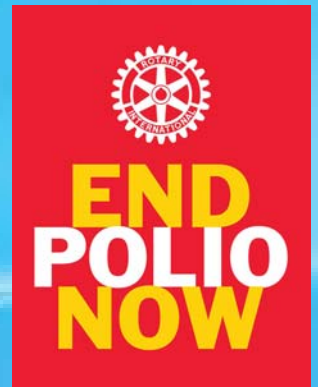


# Rotary Pie Day



24  
October

## Support Rotary's World Polio Day



*Buy a delicious  
Rotary Pie on  
October 24*

**This is a special one-day event**

Mountain High Pies, Great Western Highway, Wentworth Falls, will bake a special Rotary Pie to celebrate the occasion.

Proceeds from the sale of Rotary Pies will support polio awareness and Rotary's End Polio Campaign.

Greater Blue Mountains

**Rotary**



# A children's charity with an enormous heart

Based at Bankstown, Cessnock and Archerfield, Brisbane, Little Wings completed 2,421 missions in 2025, helping 5,100 children obtain access healthcare.

Little Wings is a 90 per cent volunteer organisation.

The CEO Clare Pearson says the charity provides a daily free service, by air or by road transport, to seriously ill children from regional and rural NSW, Q'land and the ACT.

"We focus on keeping families united and easing the emotion and financial burdens, of travel, fatigue and isolation associated with caring for a seriously ill child over long periods of time.

Our access to five major hospitals provides services that are not available in country towns. Originally providing exclusive support to children diagnosed with cancer, today, Little Wings supports children experiencing serious illness across all domains, from physical to psychological.

## **Medical Wings**

This unique program is designed to fly specialist healthcare teams to deliver pop-up clinics for vulnerable children.

In 2025, 6,000 children were assisted via this program.

The clinics are delivered in partnership with regional hospitals, Aboriginal medical centres, general practitioners and immigration centres.

"An unintentional but powerful result of this program has been the delivery of face-to-face training for regional healthcare workers aiming to build capacity and confidence.

In turn, this has reduced the need for unnecessary city referrals,"

Since the program was established in 2020, the number of clinics delivered and the volume of children assisted has increased dramatically." Clare Pearson said.



Clare Pearson, CEO Little Wings, is a guest speaker at our Rotary District 9685 Conference, at Mudgee, next year.

As a qualified psychologist specialising in child and adolescent welfare, and an author, Clare will share her insights on compassion-led leadership, collaboration, and the power of people working together to create lasting change in communities.



Images supplied

# In Case You Missed It

HeartBeat in the Blue Mountains, Thursday, November 19, 2026, at The Carrington Hotel, Katoomba, is an opportunity to showcase the Blue Mountains and promote Rotary.

It's a fundraising evening promoted by the Rotary Clubs of Sydney and Greater Blue Mountains.

The event will be an evening of elegance, fellowship, and purpose, raising vital funds for the Rotary HeartReady program.

- A cocktail function with a selection of food and drinks included in your ticket
- A Silent auction featuring fabulous prizes. Every bid supports the cause
- Fellowship with members of both Rotary clubs and their guests
- Fundraising for a life-saving program that makes a tangible difference
- Tickets are \$90 per person

The Rotary HeartReady program is a landmark initiative, a collaboration between the Rotary Club of Sydney, NSW Ambulance, and the Heart Foundation of Australia.

This life-saving program focuses on:

- Community Heart Health Education empowering communities with knowledge to recognise cardiac warning signs and take preventative action
- Emergency Response Readiness ensuring communities have access to life-saving Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), and the training to use them

Cardiac emergencies can strike anyone, anywhere. With your support, we can make our communities HeartReady prepared to respond and save lives.

Visitors will be encouraged to stay in the Blue Mountains for a couple of days, and a program of events is being arranged for November 20 and 21.

The Carrington Hotel is offering discounted rooms for people attending the fundraising event, but they will need to book their accommodation eight weeks in advance – so they need to get in quick.

## Every heartbeat matters Your support saves lives

Sydney  
Rotary

Greater Blue Mountains  
Rotary

&

Presents

HeartBeat in the  
Blue Mountains

A Fundraising Event Supporting  
Rotary HeartReady Program

Cocktail  
Function

Silent  
Auction

Thursday  
19 Nov 2026  
6:00 pm to 8:30 pm

The Carrington Hotel  
Katoomba

TICKET  
\$ 90 per person

Supporting Rotary HeartReady  
to equip communities to save  
lives when every second  
counts.

Rotary

PEOPLE OF ACTION  
TAKING ACTION

Scan to book tickets

SCAN HERE !

# Rotariada and Games of Heroes in Lithuania



Visiting Lithuania during August and September, Ian and Jennifer Scott, attended Rotariada, the largest sport, fellowship and charity event of the Lithuanian Rotary community.

Rotariada, or Rotary Lithuania Olympic Games, is the annual Rotary International District 1462 event of fellowship, sports, charity and culture.

Held twice a year, Rotariada features the Summer Rotariada each September in the coastal cities of Palanga and Klaipėda, and the Winter Rotariada in Druskininkai in January.

In 2026 Rotariada celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Since beginning in 2002, Rotariada has grown into a vibrant gathering where Rotarians, Rotaractors, and friends of Rotary participate in a variety of sports competitions, cultural activities, and social events.

All the funds raised during Rotariada are dedicated to the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee, by supporting their efforts to cultivate new talents, achieve victories, and inspire everyone.

## Games of Heroes

A contingent of veterans from the Ukraine, who are active in Games of Heroes, travelled to Palanga to participate in Rotariada.

Games of Heroes is a Ukrainian volunteer project focused on adaptive sports initiative aimed at helping veterans who have experienced severe injuries and amputations.

It focuses on their rehabilitation through sports, promoting physical exercise, social reintegration, and community support.

The project emphasizes that veterans should not be seen as patients but as active participants in their recovery journey.

Various competitions help veterans to set goals and motivate themselves while changing public perceptions about them. The initiative has successfully assisted over 6,000 veterans.

Games of Heroes emphasizes returning to movement, work, sports, friends, society, and independence.

You can read more about this amazing veteran rehabilitation program online at: <https://osvita.diia.gov.ua/en/courses/adaptive-training>



*"Privileged to participate in the Rotaradia Games in Palanga, Lithuania, alongside the amazing Defenders from Ukraine. No way I was going to compete against these heroes," Ian Scott.*



Images supplied

# Australian Rotary Health scholar reflects on her final year of study



*Kaleisha Cowan Roberts,  
Yuin and Bundjalung woman.*

*Final Year Medical Student  
UNSW*

*Indigenous Health  
Scholarship  
Flinders University, NT.*

*Doctor of Medicine  
Scholarship Awarded 2025*

*Kaleisha is supported by  
Greater Blue Mountains  
Rotary Club*

*Image supplied*

As a final year medical student, my life has been exciting, overwhelming, rewarding and, at times, quite daunting. Knowing that graduation is getting closer has made everything feel more real.

Instead of simply studying medicine, I have started imagining what it will be like to actually be a doctor, responsible for making decisions, caring for patients, and managing uncertainty that comes with clinical practice.

The biggest emotion I have experienced this year has probably been a mix of excitement and self-doubt. My final exams are only a few weeks away, and I would be lying if I said I wasn't scared.

Medicine is such a vast field that I don't think anyone ever feels completely prepared, and learning to be comfortable with that uncertainty is part of becoming a safe doctor.

Clinical placements this year have reminded me why I chose medicine. I have enjoyed seeing how the knowledge I've spent years building is finally

starting to come together in real clinical situations. There is still so much to learn, but I can recognise that I have grown in both confidence and clinical reasoning since I first started this degree.

Outside of medicine, this year has also been one of personal growth. There have been challenges, moments of uncertainty and times where balancing everything has felt difficult.

This degree has challenged me academically, emotionally and personally, and it has shaped me into someone who is more resilient, compassionate and adaptable than I was when I first began.

As I head towards my final exams, and the transition into internship, I know there will continue to be moments of doubt.

Over the past few years, I have learned that being a good doctor is not about knowing everything—it is about being willing to keep learning, asking questions and always putting patients first. That is something I hope to carry with me into the next chapter of my career.



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[australianrotaryhealth.org.au](http://australianrotaryhealth.org.au)

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# MUDGEES 2027

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Three days of inspiring speakers, practical ideas, fellowship, regional experiences and Rotary celebration in beautiful Mudgees.



# People Planet Peace

ROTARY SOUTH PACIFIC ZONE 8 CONFERENCE

Friday, 30 October 2026 - Sunday, 1 November 2026

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre  
(1 Convention Centre Place, South Wharf, VIC 3006)

# Greater Blue Mountains Rotary Wine List

Greater Blue Mountains

## Rotary



All of these wines are sourced from boutique Australian vineyards. They are true to regional & varietal style, are delicious, offer outstanding value for money and come with a money back guarantee. All are adorned with exclusive Blue Mountains Rotary labels & profits from the wine sales go directly to the club.

**Minimum order is 6 bottles and you can mix your orders from the selection below.**

**Order online too: [thewinepoint.com.au/shop/fundraisingwines/rotary](http://thewinepoint.com.au/shop/fundraisingwines/rotary)**

PER BOTTLE    PER CASE    QTY ORDER    TOTAL

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |      |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--|--|--|
| <b>Rotary King Valley Prosecco 2024</b><br>A super fresh, zesty sparkling white. Gentle pear and citrus flavours and a fine bubble makes it extra quaffable.                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$20 |  |  |  |
| <b>Rotary Victorian Premium Pinot Grigio 2024</b><br>This is very much in the Italian style of Grigio, crisp clean and citrusy though with a pear like juiciness that offers that gives it an extra hit of flavour. A crisp, white that suits salads, seafood and sipping.                                                                                            | \$20 |  |  |  |
| <b>Rotary Victorian Premium Chardonnay 2025</b><br>A slippery little Chardonnay from a blend of Victorian regions. It's got peachy cheeks and a lick of ice creamy softness. Supple and slurpable.                                                                                                                                                                    | \$20 |  |  |  |
| <b>Rotary Victorian Premium Rose 2024</b><br>A pale, dry super easy to drink pink wine made from Sangiovese and Shiraz grapes. Think rosehip and wild strawberries a juicy mid-palate and taut finish. Bring on the charcuterie and the sunshine!                                                                                                                     | \$20 |  |  |  |
| <b>Rotary Victorian Premium Pinot Noir 2024</b><br>Light in body but by no means lacking in flavour, this Victorian Pinot Noir has bright red cherry fruit, some sappy spice and soft dusty tannins. The ideal quaffer for something charcoal infused from the bbq.                                                                                                   | \$20 |  |  |  |
| <b>Rotary Victorian Premium Sangiovese 2024</b><br>This medium bodied example of the famous Italian variety hails from North East Victoria and offers up delicate aromas of red berries and roses, the palate low in tannin, fluid and juicy.                                                                                                                         | \$20 |  |  |  |
| <b>Rotary King Valley Vermentino 2025</b><br>The classic Italian variety made with a Victorian twist. It's packed with citrusy scents and layered with flavours of pink grapefruit and pear. Super crisp and clean, great with seafood.                                                                                                                               | \$30 |  |  |  |
| <b>Rotary Barossa Valley Single Vineyard Shiraz 2021</b><br>A distinctive, powerful red wine with aromas reminiscent of red plum, blackberries, cherries, vanilla and hints of chocolate. The palate is richly flavoured but finely textured. Layered with blackfruit and dark cherry fruit over fine vanillin oak character and tempered by nutmeg and pepper spice. | \$30 |  |  |  |
| + FREIGHT \$12 per case for Sydney metro · \$28 Melbourne/Brisbane/Adelaide/regional · Perth \$38)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |      |  |  |  |

Address : \_\_\_\_\_  
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