



ROTARY CLUB OF CANBERRA INCORPORATED

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

GPO Box 276

Canberra ACT 2601

www.rotarycanberra.org.au

President's Report

It is with immense pride and deep honour that I present the President's Report for the Rotary Club of Canberra for the 2024–25 year.

This has been a year defined by service, fellowship, and partnership, a year that has demonstrated the power of Rotary to connect people and create lasting impact.

A Year of Partnership and Impact

If one word defines our year, it is *partnership*.

Through Rotary's global network, we have built and strengthened connections with organisations, communities, and fellow clubs both here in Canberra and across the world. These partnerships have amplified our collective capacity to serve and to make meaningful change.

Our club has been privileged to host an outstanding range of guest speakers whose insights have enriched and inspired us.

From Professor Peter Stanley's reflections on history, to the Hon Dr Andrew Leigh's perspectives on productivity, to Desmond Woods OAM's stories of Melbourne's past each has deepened our understanding.

We were also enlightened by Michelle Blum, CEO of the AICC, on Australia–Israel relations, and Professor Amin Saikal's analysis of the Middle East. Members of the ACT Brumbies Super Rugby Women's team reminded us of the importance of teamwork and resilience, while our own Treasurer, Lawrence Fatiaki, Past President of the Rotary Club of Honiara offered a moving reminder of Rotary's global reach.

These presentations have sparked rich discussions, strengthened fellowship, and reinforced our sense of shared purpose.

Youth and Future Leaders

Our commitment to nurturing the next generation remains at the heart of our club. During the year we were delighted to host exchange student **Katharina Loemke** from Germany, whose reflections on her Australian experience were truly heart-warming. We farewelled **Jonas Stein** in June and supported **Sage Jones** in preparing for her life-changing journey to Finland in December 2024.

Our partnership with **Burgmann Anglican College** has again been instrumental in supporting our youth exchange program, and I extend my sincere thanks to the parents, grandparents, and volunteers who make this possible.

We also continued to support the **National Youth Science Forum**, while celebrating the **Kingsford Smith School's** joint second place in the **Andy Thomas Foundation Kids in Space Competition**, a testament to the enthusiasm and curiosity of Canberra's young STEM minds.

Community Engagement and Service

Our service to the Canberra community remains the cornerstone of our work. We have proudly continued our annual projects **Circus Quirkus**, **Buycycle**, and, in

partnership with the Rotary Club of Murrumbidgee, **Gnome Painting at Floriade**. These initiatives have brought joy to children with disabilities, promoted sustainability through bicycle recycling, and offered creativity and fun to Canberrans and visitors alike.

A heartfelt thank you to my board and all members who planned, supported, and implemented these programs with such dedication.

Among our new initiatives, the **Weston Park Garden Tours** launched in Spring have been a standout success, made possible through collaboration with the ACT Government.

This project, along with the **Weston Park Nursery Heritage Project**, our involvement in the **Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group**, and the **Adopt-a-Tree Program**, demonstrate our growing commitment to environmental stewardship and community engagement.

Internationally, our impact has extended from **Honiara** to **Uganda** through projects that have provided clean water, solar energy, food security, and education. Whether renewing hospital water tanks in the Solomon Islands, funding solar programs for Fijian schools, supporting the Nusa Tenggara Association in Indonesia, or feeding families and building capacity through **Project Abigail** in Uganda our club has contributed to tangible, lasting change.

Our growing friendship with the **Rotary Club of Honiara** is especially exciting and full of future potential.

At home, our support for **St John's Care**, **Roundabout Canberra**, and the **Ruby's Place working group** has quietly but powerfully improved lives. These acts of compassion remind us that Rotary service is not only about large projects it's also about small gestures of kindness that ripple outward.

Celebrating Fellowship

Our **annual Christmas Dinner** at the Australian Academy of Science's iconic **Shine Dome** was a highlight of the year, a joyful celebration of fellowship shared with members, guests, and friends from the Rotaract Club of Canberra and neighbouring Rotary clubs. Events like this remind us that our strength lies not only in service, but also in the friendships we build along the way.

Navigating Challenges

Like all clubs, we have faced challenges.

As our friend **Peter Gordon** reminded us, much of Canberra's charitable giving still flows to causes outside our city.

Attracting and retaining members and clearly articulating the unique value of Rotary remain ongoing priorities.

Yet we face these challenges with determination, optimism, and a shared belief in Rotary's enduring mission.

Gratitude and Transition

I am filled with gratitude for the dedication, generosity, and good humour of our members and friends.

My heartfelt thanks to **Immediate Past President Shawn Wilson** and to our **Board of Directors** for their wisdom and support.

To **Current President Phil Byrne**, I extend my full confidence and best wishes as you lead the club into another year of meaningful service and fellowship. To our **District Governor, Past District Governors, Past Presidents**, and **guests**, thank you for your ongoing encouragement and leadership.

Together, we have strengthened partnerships, empowered youth, and served our community with pride and purpose. Let us carry forward the spirit of *Service Above Self*, knowing that our collective efforts will continue to make a difference in Canberra and beyond.

Ash Marshall

President 2024-2025

Treasurer's Report

The 2024-25 financial year was a busy one for the Club Treasurer. From managing the budget of the Club, to making Board approved payments, to providing financial advice on Club matters, it was indeed a vibrant, interesting year for myself in the role.

Highlights included working with Club members, and other Rotarians, across the diverse range of Rotary events, and activities such as Circus Quirkus, BuyCycle, Trash and Treasure Markets, and the Gnomes stall at Floriade, and being able to contribute my financial knowledge, skills, and experience toward managing the finances of the activities.

I sincerely thank Club Immediate Past President Ash Marshall for the opportunity to serve as Treasurer for the 2024-25 financial year, as well as Club Immediate Past Treasurer Paul Street for the tremendous assistance he provided to me in my transitioning into the role. The Audited Annual Financial Report is at Annex A to the Report.

Lawrence Fatiaki

Treasurer 2024-2025

International

Honiara Hospital

The Club supported a Project developed by the Rotary Club of Honiara to update the hospital's water tank systems. The detailed project proposal developed by Honiara Rotary Club was agreed by the Board to be worthy of support up to a total of \$8000 toward the total cost of \$24,000, the balance of which would be funded by the Rotary Club of Honiara and by the Rotary Club of Balwyn in Victoria.

Separately, Desmond Woods, who successfully progressed the interest by the Balwyn Club through his contacts, progressed a RAWCS project with the aim of allowing two members of our club to provide tax free donations to the hospital project. A RAWCS account was set up to achieve this.

Consequently, the Board agreed to the contribution by our club of \$6000 from the International Budget for the Honiara Hospital project. This was supplemented by private donations of \$1000 each by Ruth Pearce and Lawrence and Telesia Fatiaki, making a total of \$8000. The completion report is attached at Annex B.

Nusa Tenggara Project

Following the presentation by members of the Nusa Tenggara Association (NSA) to the Club, John Lawrence developed a proposal to support a water and sanitation project in Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

The Board agreed that the Club contribute \$5000 towards this project which was successfully completed in late January 2025. The completion report is attached at Annex C,

The School of St Jude, Tanzania.

The Board also continued to support the provision of part of a teacher's salary at the St Jude's School in Africa by contributing \$720.

Project Abigail Uganda

Desmond Woods, through his connection with Rotary Peace Fellow Emily Nabakooza managed the funding, from a number of Rotary Clubs in Australia and the United States, of 10 new bathroom cubicles at Kimaanya Secondary School in Uganda to restore dignity, improve hygiene and empower more than 750 girls to learn with confidence. This was a significant achievement. The completion report is attached at Annex D.

Expenditure

The Club contributed a total of \$13,720 to support International Projects which included personal donations of \$2000 from club members.

Philip Byrne

International Director 2024-25

Youth Services

NYSF – National Youth Science Forum

NYSF provides talented Year 11 students with a two-week science experience at the start of Year 12. It combines hands-on activities, digital learning, and leadership development.

This year, the RCC sponsored three students - Olivia Dhepnorarat, Charlotte Valios and Brendan Johnson to attend the NYSF. All three students were very grateful for the financial support and presented the outcome of their participation to members at a meeting in February 2025.

Sponsoring the three students underscores our commitment to supporting students in their academic and professional pursuits.

Kingsford Smith School (KSS) - Participation in the STEMMIES Final in Adelaide

Following the provision of financial support to send several Year 6 students to Adelaide for the Kids in Space program, KSS reached out again to seek financial support for participation at a national STEM Innovation Experience competition in Adelaide.

The RCC supported a team of five students to attend the STEMMIES National Finals in Adelaide. The \$3000 contribution helped to meet the overall cost of \$12,500.

The team presented to members at a meeting in February 2025, and also promoted the RCC's sponsorship in all of its communication activities. This partnership highlights our commitment to building strong relationships with local schools and inspiring young minds.

Rotary Youth Driving Awareness (RYDA) Program

RYDA - Rotary Youth Driver Awareness, is a road safety program for students aged 16-18 who are nearing the age where they can drive independently. The RCC had initial discussion with a private sector organisation that was assisting with the RYDA program. Following the approach, the proposed program in Canberra was postponed as the suggested dates were not suitable.

Expenditure 2024-25 Youth Portfolio

- NYSF: \$4,475
- KSS: \$3,000
- Total: \$7,475

Usha Naidu

Youth Services Director

Youth Exchange Program

Each year, RCC endeavours to participate in one of the most valuable International programs. This program changes the lives of students who are chosen to spend a year in another country, learning another style of education and a different language.. They learn to converse fluently, to learn independence and represent their home country.

In 2024, we chose Ethan/Sage Jones as our Outbounder who went to Finland. Sage mastered Finnish, then Swedish when his placement changed to the Swedish speaking area.

Our Inbounder for the year was Katharina Loemke from Southern Bavaria. Katharina was a very accomplished cellist, so we established a relationship with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, who helped Katharina with finding an instrument, a mentor who was a constant source of support and gave her the opportunity to play in fine venues. Helen Moore assisted greatly as her Counsellor.

Many thanks go to Burgmann Anglican School, which accommodates our students each year, making it affordable for our Club, giving support to our students, and opportunities for excursions.

Thank you so much to our host parents each year without whom we cannot run this wonderful program.

Natalie Vandeppeer Bradley

Youth Exchange

Community Services

Rotary District 9705 Vulnerable Youth Project

The Rotary Club of Canberra continued its annual \$9,000 contribution to the District 9705 Vulnerable Youth Project, which supports at-risk youth through a home in Waramanga operated by Conflict Resolution Services. This initiative has helped reunite families and provide meaningful support to young people through activities, transport, and recreational resources. In the past year, Rotary funding enabled Christmas gifts, summer outings, and the purchase of equipment that enhanced the wellbeing of participants.

Significant governance changes were implemented during the year to strengthen the project's financial management. The District Board approved the establishment of independent bank accounts and accounting systems for the Vulnerable Youth Project, allowing for more autonomous and transparent operations. These changes were accompanied by the adoption of a new financial policy and accounting software.

Engagement with the NSW Government remains active, with senior officials expressing interest in the Ruby's model as part of a broader review of youth homelessness services. While a second ACT home is not currently supported by the ACT Government, the project continues to advocate for expansion and is being considered in national reviews of crisis accommodation services.

Foundation

The Club continued its support to the Rotary Foundation by donating \$8000.

Environment

Broad Environment Promotion

At the District Conference held in Mittagong on 25-27 October 2024, an environmental stand in the hall of friendship was set up featuring a display and information about invasive pests, including the fire ant. Information kits supplied by the Invasive Species Council were distributed to many Clubs across District 9705 and further promoted over the course of 2024-25. A special presentation on invasive weeds was given at the Rotary Club of Boorowa on 21 May 2025, which was well received.

Now looking at redesigning the Enviro Award Certificate for 2026.

Weston Park Nursery Heritage Project

Keeping ivies and other invasives at bay, has been the main focus of our Club's work at the English Garden in Weston Park. Working with ACT Urban Parks Management, we established a Friends of Weston Park Nursery Heritage in 2023. In addition to weed control, we have undertaken pruning and bulb planting. We have supervised over 20 hours of volunteer activity since November 2024. Our activities in this area make it a perfect venue for a Clean Up Australia day activity.

Tours of Weston Park English Garden

In the past twelve months, tours of the Weston Park English Garden were conducted, with a special emphasis on exploring an environmental timescape. Over \$120 was raised from the tours which was shared equally between RCC and Camellia Ark Australia. Importantly, and after much work, these tours were incorporated into ACT Heritage Week in May 2025; these raised an additional \$60 for RCC.

Rotary Nara Peace Bell Committee

Club representation on this Committee chaired by Gary Davis is a more recent development during 2025. Because of our close association with ACT Urban Parks Management, and because RCC has made infrastructure donations to Nara Peace Park within Lennox Gardens in the past, it gives us a continuing interest in this space. A paper is being developed linking an environment and peace theme of relevance to the garden spaces.

Dr Stephen Utick PHF

Director, Environment

Public Image

Sandra Turner carried out her role as Public Image director very effectively until her resignation from the Club due to her move to Adelaide. General advertising for Buycycle and ongoing Facebook posts kept the Club in the public arena.

Following Sandra's departure, Natalie Vandeppeer Bradley volunteered to create a Club Bulletin for placing on Club Runner for the rest of the Rotary year.

Reviewed Financial Statements

The Financial Reports for 2024-2025 are provided as an annexure to this Annual Report along with the Reviewers Report.

.....
Ashley Marshall

President 2024-2025

Rotary Club of Canberra

Date: 17 November

.....
Lawrence Fatiaki

Treasurer 2024-2025

Rotary Club of Canberra

Date: 17 November 2025

Annexes:

- A. Treasurer's Report
 - i Reviewed Financial Statement
 - ii Reviewed Financial statement for Circus Quirkus
- B Rotary Club of Honiara Completion Report
- C Nusa Tenggara Water and Sanitation Report
- D Project Abigale Report