



Where Passion Meets Purpose

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



2024-2025 President's Report

Kevin Carey

A Few Words From Down South

Just a few to express my appreciation to all for the most amazing and rewarding year I have experienced. To see what we are now as a club compared to twelve months ago. Not a lot to do with me. Amazing contributions from all to be where we are now. Be it membership growth, successful local and overseas service projects. Both have brought a new feel to us which will continue to grow during the coming Rotary year and all those following.

Looking forward to our Change Over on the 29th. To be part of the celebration of the past year and embrace what the next year brings. To those of you who are unable to be at Wangaratta on the 29th, for whatever reason, my thanks for your contribution for the 2024-25 Rotary successful year.

2024-25

President and Chair of the Board

Kevin Carey

Rotary International President

Stephanie Urchick

District Governor 9790

Stephen O'Connell

Board Members

Secretary

Kathryn Chivers

President Elect 2024-25

Susan Benedyka

Treasurer

Clive Walker

Bulletin Editor and FFP Representative

Clark Fletcher

Foundation

Jody Duckworth

Youth

Phil Clancy

Past President

Paul Conroy

Assistant Secretary

Jody Duckworth

Membership

Kevin Carey

On-Line Presence

Kathryn Chivers, Susan Benedyka, Tammy Atkins

Program

Clark Fletcher

Youth

Phil Clancy, Mel Nicholson

Regionalisation

Phil Clancy

International Service

Lawrie Leeman, Peter Siebel

On to Conference Chair

Ros Stewart

2024-2025 The Secretary's Report

Kathryn Chivers

Verse

(with a Rotary heart)

We gather not round tables square,
But through the glowing, pixelated air.
A Rotary heart, a digital flame,
We serve the world—differently, but the same.

Minutes ticked and voices shared,
Across the time zones, always prepared.
Reports roll in with care and grace,
Each line a footprint in our space.

We promote peace with open minds,
In every project, hope entwined.
We fight disease with steady hands,
And *clean water* flows through distant lands.

We save the lives of mothers, kin,
Where care begins, true change begins.
We educate with books and light,
And *grow economies* toward what's right.

We protect the Earth, our common ground,
Where service roots run deep and sound.
From gardens stirred by ancient breeze,
To bees that hum through eucalyptus trees,
Our hands tend soil where stories lie,
In every patch beneath the sky.

Now look ahead—what next, you'll see
Are tales of work and unity:
DEI dreams and EPIC days,
Community built in curious ways.

So read on friends, the story grows,
With every click, our purpose shows.
We're pen and voice, we're hope and flame—
Doing things differently... but ever the same.

2024-2025 Treasurer's Report

PDG Clive Walker OAM

Annual Treasurers Report

The 2023 – 2024 Club accounts were audited and reported to Consumer Affairs Victoria.

The Club commenced the 2024 – 2025 year with a credit balance of \$2,559.87 in our Club Operations Account, \$0.02 in the Foundation Account (Grants) and \$4,266.31 in our Charity Account.

This Rotary Year to date:

Club Operations Account

Had non – budgeted items that cost

\$792.88	Fit for Purpose
\$1,151.63	Web and Domain Costs set up cost for new club name

Club Charity Account

Highlighted Fundraising

\$2,500	Lucky Number Project
\$3,271	Prisoners on the Run – This source of funds now unavailable
\$4,727	Bunnings BBQ
\$6,939	Sri Lanka – Thanks to Pieter's Lunch at Beechworth (\$4,409)

Expenditure to date:

\$1,000	Foundation
\$1,500	Rice for Cambodia
\$1,706	Sri Lanka with \$5,200 committed
\$1,400	RYLA
\$1,000	Australian Rotary Health
\$500	District Governors Partner Project
\$500	Malaria
\$500	Friends of Lacluta
\$1,000	Paid out over 10 weeks to winners of the Lucky Number Game

2025 - 2026 Rotary Year

The Board reviewed the fees for the 2025 - 2026 Rotary year (1 July 25) and subject to Club approval, will be \$350, which is an increase of \$50. This amount also accounts for a minor deficit.

2024-2025 Culture Committee Report

Kevin Carey

The committee held three meetings, held in the latter part of the year. The delayed start was a decision made due to the considerable “Fit for Purpose activity in the first half of the year. Eight club members put their hands up to be part of the discussions.

The major points to emerge from those meeting discussions centred on how to engage members during meeting time. To allocate time for new members to introduce themselves and engage in club meeting time.

The club has picked up on a number of points raised during those three meetings.

- Establish a fund-raising committee
- Project focus for fund raising and the use of flow charts for allocation detail
- Communicate the purpose of the Club
- Explore the use of Club Runner
- Develop a Welcome and Induction process for new members

The club early Health Check was seen somewhat outdated. The influx of new members changes the club dynamic.

The review of Club Culture is part of “Fit for Purpose,” which means that the review will continue for the coming year and an additional Health Check will be undertaken.

Thanks to all committee members for engagement and contribution during those three meetings.

2024-2025 Membership Report

Susan Benedyka

This has been an outstanding year for membership in the Rotary eClub of Change Makers. Our club has grown from 18 members to 30 members (as of early June 2025). We are held a prospective members' introduction to Rotary night on 12 June 2025.

Our deliberate focus on recruitment aligns with our commitments under our Strategic Plan, the Fit for Purpose program, and the District 9790 Framework for Improvement.

Context Strategic Plan

Our 3-year Strategic Plan (adopted in 2024) aligns with the Rotary International Action Plan. By 2027, we aim to be a thriving, forward-thinking community of 35 members and associate members. Our annual target is to recruit:

- 5 new members and/or associate members in 2024, 2025, and 2026

Fit for Purpose

We began our participation in the Fit for Purpose program in October 2024 and set the following goals:

- Overall Goal: To grow our club membership and make our club culture the best it can be
- Desired Outcomes: 10 new members over the 18-month life of the program (as noted by Clark at the Sydney meeting, October 2024)

District 9790 Framework for Improvement

This was the first year of the Framework, with membership goals including:

- A Membership Engagement Health Check
- Implement strategies for a net gain of 2 new members (at least one under 40 years)
- Complete the membership assessment tool to support diversity

What Did We Do?

We established two committees – Membership and Culture – and invited all members to join one.

The Membership Committee:

- Engaged all members in the Membership Engagement Health Check
- Analysed the health check results
- Generated ideas on how to recruit and target new members
- Hosted a new members' information session on 12 December 2024
- Created a clear pathway for new members, including an online Expression of Interest
- Delivered a face-to-face Orientation to Rotary and information session in Beechworth (12 January 2025)
- Conducted an online Rotary Basics session for new members
- Inducted new members both online and face to face (including at the District Conference by the RI Representative)
- Reached out to less-engaged members to understand their goals and how to keep them involved

Membership Changes

Category	July 1, 2024	June 8, 2025	Change
Members	19	30	+57%
Female Members(%)	42%	53%	+ 9%
Members under 40	10.5%	13.3%	+ 2.8%
Internationally based members	1	3	-

Additionally, 33.4% of members have five years or less of Rotary service. This highlights the need for mentoring, integrating members into club roles, and succession planning. We plan to implement a robust mentoring program and pair each new member with a club mentor.

Conclusion

Our active recruitment strategy has resulted in a significant membership increase and a vibrant club culture. Deliberately targeting members with a project and purpose focus has also boosted the number of club projects and initiatives.

2024-2025 Fit for Purpose Report

Clark Fletcher

In August 2024 our club applied to be one of a 100 clubs in Zone 8 to attend the Fit for Purpose conference in Sydney. Our club was fortunate to be accepted into this program and of the 86 clubs selected to attend, we were the only e-Club at the conference.

The goal of Fit for Purpose is to grow membership within the attending clubs and to create a member recruitment template for other clubs around the world to follow. The program is to run from October 2024 and end in July 2025. The project has been formulated to reverse the trend of declining Rotary membership around the world. It was stressed that our club is to give a total commitment to the goals of FFP and to strongly drive the membership message among our members until the completion of the program. Ultimately the program is designed to make our club an attractive destination for new Rotarians.

To get our members on board with this innovative program, we created two committees to drive FFP. The committees are “Membership” chaired by Susan Benedyka and “Club Culture” chaired by Kevin Carey.

The ultimate goal was to have an increase of 10 new members by 30 June 2026. In October 2024 we had 22 members and our membership total in June 2025 is now 30. This is a 36% increase. We are currently on track to achieve the final goal of 32 members. We also have an additional 3 Associate Members.

To assist our club in achieving our membership goals, there were further goals and improvements set in place to make sure our club grows our membership, improves club culture and reaches our FFP membership target.

- Membership and Club Culture committees continue to meet regularly
- Conducted two new member meetings – December 2024 and June 2025
- Conducted a Rotary orientation and information session for new members – January 2025
- Emphasis on retaining membership going forward into 2025-26. All members who may have considered leaving/discontinuing membership have been contacted and re-engaged
- Facebook is well established, has been updated
- New Website created from Club Runner - Feb 2025
- Club Runner and Website to be managed by Brendan Wilkinson

- AI (ChatGPT) now used to create bulletin reports, and to assist with media releases, content for social media – February 2025
- Club WhatsApp site created June 2025
- WhatsApp account established for those attending District Conference
- New bulletin format created from Club Runner, managed by Renee Fletcher – March 2025
- Club Runner emailing system to be used extensively – April 2025
- Social and Media plan introduced Feb 2025
- Two Club banners created Feb 2025 (for use at club live events)
- Appointment of a dedicated manager of Public Image – with a working committee, Jody Duckworth, March 2025
- LinkedIn site created by Jody Duckworth, February 2025
- Mentor plan developed by Phil Clancy, utilising the mentor plan from DG. Stephen O’Connell. Club Culture committee considering best implementation
- PE Susan Benedyka allocating positions and roles for all members
- All new members interviewed re passions, projects and potential roles
- Board to oversee project formulation and a Project Implementation template created
- Value Proposition created Feb 2025
- Regular monthly board meetings established for 2025-26
- YouTube site is in the process of being established – June 2025
- Strategic Plan is undergoing review and updates on a regular basis. Last updated Feb2025. FFP goals/strategies have been included in Strategic Plan
- Rotary Basics online session for new members, conducted on 31 March 2025

2024-2025 Project Reports

Pieter Siebel

Dambana School

26 computers to be retained for the school. The rest will be held in storage at the Badulla club for future projects.

We are providing computer desks and chairs and Teacher in a box. The Badulla club will initiate a computer literacy program at the school with the help of the Uva Wellassa University Rotaract club.

Robyn is planning on visiting the school to continue with her language project late July (Robyn will have updates on this).

We are purchasing a sensor cut off valve for the pump to avoid burn out and updating the pump.

We will be upgrading the schools volleyball court by resurfacing and providing a new net.

Adavasi Language Project

This project is tracking well, with a completion date around September/October. Collation of words and phrases have been done and authenticated by 2 independent language professors. Translation into Sinhala and English has been completed. Translation into Tamil is nearly complete.

I have completed the acknowledgement page and sent it over. We should have a digital copy around the end of July for review prior to printing.

We need to gauge interest from club members on attendance at the launch – perhaps a club friendship visit?

I have organised a venue for the launch and invited the chief and others from the village. There will be print and TV coverage and no doubt a few parliamentarians seeking photo opportunities

Future Projects: Medical and Education in Badulla, Sri Lanka

My personal genesis began in tea estates in Sri Lanka; it is the reason I love mountainous regions and the people who inhabit them. It is also the reason for my early departure from home. Inequality is deeply embedded within these estates.

The 'Estate Tamils' as they are known were brought to Sri Lanka by the British colonisers to work in the new coffee plantations. Yes, coffee was the first successful crop grown in Sri Lanka until blight took hold and destroyed crops which led to the establishment of tea plantations.

These people are still not considered equal to the dominant Sinhalese population. Education and healthcare are managed by individual estates with wild variances between them. The school dropout rate in Sri Lanka's general population is 3%, this doubles with estate worker families, with many children having to stay home due to poverty, lack of resources and poor living conditions.

Estate Tamils often live in poverty with children forced to work at home or on the estates to supplement household income, this contributes to school drop-out rates.

Overcrowded living conditions, distance to school, lack of support systems and low parental awareness lead to a lack of education and early marriage for young females.

Improving access to quality education and resources, raising community awareness, teacher training and retention will go a long way to help students believe that anything is possible. We have demonstrated this with the Dambana school project.

I believe that this would be an excellent long-term project for our club in partnership with the Hive club. We will have enough computers to help support programs in schools in the region.

Medical

This is where Jenny Foster enters right stage

Remote locations, poverty, lack of education, transportation problems, insecure employment, staff and equipment shortages all play a part in the problem of inadequate healthcare.

The government attempted to integrate national healthcare services into those offered by individual estates with little success.

Child and maternal health, diabetes education and support are the critical areas that need to be addressed.

Fortunately, the Badulla club are already in the process of diabetes education and are rolling out a program in the near future.

Was it good karma or Kismet that led Jenny to us? This seems tailor made for our club.

The potential outcomes for the estate workers and their families will be profound.

The healthcare program will come with its challenges, predominantly from the owners of individual estates who pay their workers a pittance whilst reaping large profits (think any of the mega tea brands and you will be correct).

I quite fancy a Stouch with the big boys!

Very keen to hear your thoughts.

Acknowledgements

The compilation of this dictionary of the Adivasi language of the Vedda people marks a significant step in preserving an ancient and endangered linguistic heritage. This endeavour would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of dedicated individuals and organizations who share a deep respect for the cultural and linguistic identity of the Vedda community.

The Rotary E-Club of Changemakers, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Badulla and the Rotaract Club of Uva Wellassa University, came together with a shared vision—to document and safeguard the words and phrases of the Vedda people of Dambana, Sri Lanka. This dictionary is a testament to our collective commitment to linguistic preservation and cultural appreciation.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Michael Sansoni, a true friend of the Vedda people, whose introduction to Chief Uruwarige Wannialettho and his community was invaluable. Michael, your unwavering support and friendship have been instrumental in the success of this project—thank you, old friend.

Special thanks to the ever-reliable Philip Clancy, who first suggested the idea of this dictionary in his inimitable style. Phil, your passion for knowledge and your ability to inspire new perspectives have left a lasting impact. Every conversation with you is a lesson in itself.

We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to Rasheed Mohamed Nazeem, a cherished friend from my youth, who was present at the inception of this initiative. Your encouragement and steadfast belief in this project gave me the confidence to see it through. Thank you for your unwavering support.

Our sincere appreciation goes to Chief Uruwarige Wannialettho and the Vedda community for their generosity in sharing their knowledge and heritage with us. It is our hope that this dictionary serves as a meaningful contribution to the preservation of their linguistic and cultural identity.

Beyond its role in preservation, this dictionary serves as a valuable learning tool for students and teachers alike. By offering insight into the language and traditions of the Vedda people, it provides an opportunity for educational engagement and cultural appreciation. Scholars and researchers will also find this dictionary to be an essential resource for further linguistic and anthropological studies, enabling a deeper understanding of this unique language and its historical significance.

The Vedda people, the indigenous inhabitants of Sri Lanka, have a history that stretches back thousands of years, making them one of the oldest continuous cultures in the world. Once a proud community of hunter-gatherers, the Vedda have traditionally lived in harmony with the island's forests, following a way of life deeply connected to nature. Their language, a unique and largely oral tradition, is a vital part of their heritage, reflecting the wisdom, customs, and beliefs that have been passed down through generations.

Over the years, the Vedda people have faced immense challenges, including land encroachment, modernization, and cultural assimilation. Despite these pressures, they have steadfastly preserved their identity, with leaders like Chief Uruwarige Wannialettho advocating for their rights and traditions. This dictionary is a humble effort to support the Vedda in their fight to safeguard their language and ensure that future generations continue to speak the words of their ancestors.

It is our sincere hope that this work serves as a bridge between cultures, fostering greater understanding and appreciation for the Vedda people and their invaluable contributions to Sri Lanka's heritage.

This project would not be possible without the tireless work of the following members of the Uva Wellassa Rotaract Club – Naween Sandeep, Ninadi Heshara, Samoda Pinsara, Sathsara Senarathna, Dehemi Samarasinghe, Nimesh Madapatha, Sachini Madushka, Gayathma Weerawanni, Thisal Walgampaya, Nimesha Bandara, Pasindu Sirimanna, Nipuni Rubasinghe, Ashen Vimukthi, Piyumi Madhushani, Lowamini Prabhashika, Raees Ahmedh, Sathmini Sooriyawansa, Sasini Savindi, Avishka Thamali, Rageesha Priyadarshani, Nethmini Karunarathne , Bashitha Vishalka, Praveen Kavishanka, Pavithre Wickramarathna, The Rotary Club of Badulla 3220, Channdima Karunnasena, Jayasooriya de Silva, and finally, to Rotarian Krishantha Roshan Pussegoda, thank you.

Without your commitment and dedication this project would have struggled to get off the ground.

Lawrie Leeman

Rice for Cambodia

Rice for Cambodia received a grant of A\$1500.00 from Rotary e Club of Changemakers in November 2024. The purpose of the grant was to allow RFC to purchase school supplies as identified by the Principal of Sandan Primary School for the commencement of the school year on the 1st November 2024.



Jenny Foster

SHARE Committee

Paul Lloyd	Chair, Transport and Logistics	RC of Southern Mitchell
Sally Armstrong	Volunteers, Education	RC of Keilor East
Clark Fletcher	Finance and Risk	RC of Change Makers
Jenny Foster	Partnerships/networking	RC of Change Maker
Sandi Fulcher	Marketing and Publicity	RC of Change Makers
Marie Gerrard	International	RC of Southern Mitchell
Heather Redmond	Secretary, Governance	RC of Change Makers

2024-2025 Achievements

- Finance and Risk – bank accounts established and draft budget for 2025-2026 accepted
- Governance – Strategic Plan developed
- Warehousing and Logistics Policy adopted
- Insurance issues clarified
- Works in Progress include our agreement with the eClub and a governance schedule
- International – partners identified and needs explored for many recipients, with active planning under way for shipping to Fiji, PNJ, Uganda and more
- Marketing and Publicity – created branding with logo and letterhead, page on eClub website, Facebook page being set up, structure chart, a Friends of SHARE database and much more
- Partnerships and Networking – within and beyond Australia, many, many conversations are establishing a network of friends, donors, supporters, volunteers and partners. All international projects will be Rotary to Rotary, i.e. with an in-country Rotary club as lead managers
- Transport and Logistics – the first of our policies to be completed and adopted
- Works in Progress include inventory, shed set up and transport sponsorship
- Volunteers and Education – regular local volunteers Tuesdays at the shed, and last Saturday of the month working bees, volunteers include members of Probus and CWA, among others
- This is a sample listing of donors of in-kind and financial contributions - Northeast Health, Wangaratta; Albury-Wodonga Health; Chisholm TAFE, RC of Seymour (tools), RC of Albert Park (books), St Peters school Keilor (laptops), Fella Hamilton (scrubs), Australian Electoral Commission (stationery)
- We have already provided materials to Hope in a Suitcase (books), Sri Lanka (laptops and books), Wimmera Settlement Services and Nhill Karen Community (women and children's clothing), Medi share (for Bangladesh), with many further projects in negotiation.

EPIC Day of Service – Kathryn Chivers

The EPIC Day of Service is a global initiative by Rotary that brings together Rotarians and community members for a single day of impactful service. The goal is to ignite a ripple effect of kindness, innovation, and lasting change by addressing real community needs and strengthening bonds through meaningful projects.

This year, the EPIC Day of Service was set for May 17, 2025, and offers a wide range of service opportunities—from environmental conservation to supporting local families and improving community spaces. The movement encourages individuals to take action and be part of a global effort to make a difference.

EPIC Day of Service Success at Beechworth Chinese Garden

In just 3.5 hours, our dedicated team of four Rotary members rolled up their sleeves and started on two sections of the Beechworth Chinese Garden, reinforcing its cultural and environmental significance. The hard work was well rewarded with lunch at a local hotel, where we reflected on the impact we made.

The following day, we continued our service with five more members turning up for a 2-hour shift in Wangaratta for a Bunnings BBQ, strengthening our bonds and commitment to community service.

Despite only three days of planning, the results were fantastic! This effort truly exemplifies what Rotary stands for—taking action, bringing people together, and creating lasting change.

Check out the photos to see our team in action! A huge THANK YOU to everyone who contributed—your dedication and teamwork made this project a success! Looking forward to next year's EPIC Day of Service

Guest Speakers and Club Events

Date	Guest Speaker	Subject
11 July 2024	Club Night	Planning
25 July	Jenny Foster	RI Convention Singapore
8 August	Paul Ryan	Australian Resilience Centre
22 August	Club Night	Planning
5 September	Donna Mlejnek	Africa
19 September	PDG David Clark	RAWCS
3 October	Hamish Jones	RAM (Rotary Against Malaria)
17 October		FFP Report and Club business
31 October		AGM and club business
14 November	Bethany Waddell	Scouting
28 November	PDG David Anderson	Rotary Foundation
12 December	Club Night	Planning
26 December	No meeting	
9 January 2025	Club Night	Framework for Improvement
23 January	Rtn John Oswald	PNG and RAWCS projects
6 February	Rtns Siebel, Jones and Benedyka Will Fuller	Dambana school, Sri Lanka. RYLA
20 February	Club Night and DG Stephen O'Connell	Planning Fit for Purpose
6 March	Julie Armstrong Brendan Wilkinson	Hope in a Suitcase Life History in 5 minutes
20 March	Rtn David Motta Renee Fletcher	Tiny Homes Life history in 5 minutes
3 April	Club Night and Dr Rendi Moke	Planning. Life history in 5 minutes
17 April	Rtn Cathy Booth	RAWCS Umoja Project, Kenya
1 May	Rtn Sandi Fulcher	End Trachoma
15 May	Rtn Kellie Kadaoui	Hive Rotary Club, Wodonga "Paying it Forward"
29 May	Rtn Mel Nicholson	Mandala project
12 June	Club membership Rtn Lisbeth Long	New member session Life history in 5 minutes
26 June	Club Night	Planning
10 July	Graeme Sayers	Say No To Domestic Violence

2024-25

President and Chair of the Board

Susan Benedyka

Rotary International President

Francesco Arezzo

District Governor 9790

Emma Davis

**UNITE
FOR
GOOD**



Board Members

Secretary

Clark Fletcher

Treasurer

Clive Walker

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Youth

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Past President

Kevin Carey

On-Line Presence

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