



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

## Rotary Club of Katikati New Zealand

### Bulletin

6 September 2021

Editors: Nigel Williams  
& Martin Hawke



## N.B. — Covid Lockdown Level 2

**Our 13 September meeting will again be a Zoom online meeting.**  
Instructions on how to join the meeting are included below.

## Programme:

**13 September - Toni Millar** will brief us on progress with the **Garden Ramble project**. This meeting will be followed by a **Directors Meeting**. All are welcome to stay on for this.

**21 September - Batteries load-out at Morison residence**

## To Join the Online Meeting:

The meeting will begin at 6:30pm      To join in click on this link. You may then be prompted to:

- Click on a “*button*” labelled “**Join Meeting**”
- Enter the **Meeting ID**: 824 0833 9358
- Enter the **Passcode**: 738680

If you require assistance you can phone Sandra Haigh on 021 106 5972

## Club Notes:

1. Katikati College is nominating a female student to attend the Rotary National Science and Technology Forum in Auckland next January.
2. Food parcels and vouchers continue to be delivered under the **Food Delivery Programme**.
3. The booklet for the **Garden Ramble** is “at the printer”. Tickets are on sale online here, or at the **Katikati Information Centre**.

# Special Guest Speaker — Angus (Gus) Davidson

Gus joined us online from Adelaide. He is currently the Group Operations Director for Prime Consulting International, a global agribusiness management consultancy headquartered in Wellington.

He has spent the past decade immersed in Afghan agriculture, business and culture, including living in **Bamyan province** full-time for four years, frequent travel and most recently having returned from Afghanistan in **May 2021**.



Gus moved to Bamyan in 2011 to manage the implementation of the **Afghanistan Agricultural Support Programme (ASP)** for the (NZ) Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The ASP was New Zealand's flagship development programme in Afghanistan implemented between 2011 and 2017. He has also managed the implementation of several other development programmes in Afghanistan for **USAID**, the **UK** Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, the **Danish** International Development Agency, and the **Asian** Development Bank. He was appointed as the private sector development advisor to the Afghanistan Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock in 2015.

During his spectacularly illustrated talk Gus gave us a brief overview of the colourful history of Afghanistan, the “graveyard of many empires”. His comments included: the challenging mountainous geography which contributes to Afghans saying that they have “never been conquered”; the difficulties of moving around the country; the strong tribal culture making nationhood problematic; the porous boundaries (especially with Pakistan) with the 6 adjacent countries; the extreme security measures required to travel around safely.

Bamyan is one of the thirty-four provinces of Afghanistan, located in the central highlands of the country. Its terrain is mountainous or semi-mountainous, at the western end of the Hindu Kush mountains concurrent with the Himalayas. It is the largest province in the Hazarajat region of Afghanistan, and is the cultural capital of the Hazara ethnic group that predominates in the area.



In antiquity, central Afghanistan was strategically placed to thrive from the **Silk Road** caravans that criss-crossed the region, trading between the **Roman Empire**, China, Central Asia and South Asia. Bamyan was a stopping-off point for many travellers. It was here that elements of **Greek and Buddhist art** were combined into a unique classical style known as Greco-Buddhist art. The province has several famous historical sites, including the famous 1500 year old (now-destroyed by the Taliban) **Buddhas of Bamiyan**, around which are more than 3,000 caves. Urban civilization is believed to have begun as early as 3000 BC. Buddhism was widespread in the region before the Islamic conquest of Afghanistan.



Afghanistan's significant ancient Buddhist heritage is recorded through wide-ranging archeological finds, including religious and artistic remnants. Many statues of Buddha were carved into the sides of cliffs facing Bamyan city. The two most prominent of these statues were standing Buddhas, measuring 55 and 37 meters high respectively, that were the largest examples of standing Buddha carvings in the world. They were probably erected in the **4th or 5th century A.D.** They were cultural landmarks for many years and are listed among UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. In March 2001 the **Taliban government** decreed that the statues were idolatrous and ordered them to be demolished with anti-aircraft artillery and explosives.

(continued)

**The Taliban** ('students' or 'seekers'), which has referred to itself as the *Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan* is an Islamist religious-political movement and military organization. The Taliban's ideology has been described as combining an "innovative" form of **Sharia Islamic law** based on Deobandi fundamentalism and militant Islamism, combined with Pashtun social and cultural norms, as most Taliban are **Pashtun tribesmen**. From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban held power over roughly three-quarters of Afghanistan, and enforced a strict interpretation of Sharia, or Islamic law, shifting power away from **Mujahidin** warlords. Democracy is an entirely foreign concept in a country with centuries of strong tribal/village culture. After the U.S. and it's allies invaded in 2001 the Taliban were totally disenfranchised, marginalized and terrorized under a corrupt puppet government.

Between 1996 and 1999, the Taliban controlled 96% of Afghanistan's poppy fields and made opium its largest source of taxation. The Taliban had come to increasingly rely on three sources of money: **opium poppy cultivation**, the Pakistanis and the notorious **Osama bin Laden**.

The country's rich natural underdeveloped mineral and fossil fuel resources include: coal, copper, iron ore, **lithium**, uranium, **rare earth elements**, chromite, **gold**, zinc, talc, barite, sulfur, lead, marble, **precious and semi-precious stones**, natural gas, and petroleum. In 2010, US and Afghan government officials estimated that untapped mineral deposits located in 2007 by the US Geological Survey are worth **at least \$1 trillion**.

The **Afghanistan Agricultural Support Programme (ASP)** commenced in 2011 as part of international peace building and reconstruction efforts, the New Zealand Government and British Government allocating funds for a three year multi-million dollar programme to modernise and improve agriculture practices in Bamyan Province. **Prime Consulting International Ltd** was contracted in 2011 to design an integrated programme of support activities for Bamyan and was subsequently awarded a contract to implement it.

Tapping into existing farmer co-operatives across four districts, Prime was able to grow farmers' average household incomes by 35% within three years. **Wheat** yields increased by 80% , **potato** yields improved by 32 per cent and farmers welcomed a substantial reduction in livestock mortality. Prime provided **64 tractors** and other implements, set up a beekeeping initiative for women, improved animal health services and managed the construction and start-up of a large **potato packhouse**.

Prime also upskilled 16 agriculture professionals, in partnership with Bamyan University and the Provincial *Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock*, to support ongoing development of the sector. Phase One of the ASP was completed in 2014. The New Zealand Government allocated further funding for a Phase Two programme to build on the successes of Phase One. (See **Video** [here](#))

Critical to improving agricultural productivity and regional development is harnessing the water resources, largely based on seasonal snow melt. This has involved building an irrigation canal and storage dam and small hydro-electric installation to enable village dwellings to have light, refrigeration and TV. Now a **humanitarian crisis** is taking place.





A banner for the 2021 Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands Virtual Conference. The background is a light blue sky with a large, glowing, circular light pattern. On the left, there is a logo with the text "LEARNING · LEADING · ACTION" in a semi-circle above three stylized human figures in blue and yellow. Below this is the "Rotary Zone 8" logo, which includes the Rotary International gear logo. To the right, the text "2021 AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, PACIFIC ISLANDS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE" is written in bold, black, uppercase letters. Below that, the dates "11 - 12 September 2021" are displayed. At the bottom, there is an orange bar containing a computer monitor icon, the website "www.rotaryzone8.org/events", the Instagram and Facebook logos, and the text "rotaryzone8conference".

**2021 AUSTRALIA,  
NEW ZEALAND,  
PACIFIC ISLANDS  
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

**11 - 12 September 2021**

Rotary Zone 8

[www.rotaryzone8.org/events](http://www.rotaryzone8.org/events)

[Instagram](#) [Facebook](#) [rotaryzone8conference](#)

## **Programme**

### **Women In Rotary: A History**

Five years ago our club had **2 women members** only. We now have **10!** Read more [here](#).



**Click on this [link](#) for our latest news.** Things are really moving along!

## **Parting Thought** from **Peter Mackay**

**An impressive government is more to feared than a tiger**

*Confucius*