

REPORT 2014-2015

President Desmond Darby

BOARD

President: Desmond Darby

President Elect (PE) and Club Service Director: James Wheeler

President Nominee (PN) and Membership Director: Murray Isdale

Immediate Past President (IPP) and Foundation Director: Jaye Howey

Education and Employment Director: Kathy Bryant

Health and Wellbeing Director: Linda Birch

Environment and Public Amenities Director: Dave Comparini

International Director: Stephen Falvey

Special Projects Director: Tony Poole

Secretary: Judy Dearsley

Treasurer: Dave Morris

COMMITTEE WORK

Our Committees are the engine room of the Club, providing the three things we do: serving our community, keeping us informed of community issues through our weekly Speakers Programme, and developing friendships. This year we restructured some of these Committees and created an additional one, to enhance their focus on results, to better define their scope, and to make them smaller and more manageable. We noted that the previous longstanding structure led to some overly large committees, had an unclear scope for “community” service, and did not follow either of the models suggested by Rotary International. The new structure remains consistent with the purpose of Rotary, with our Club’s Constitution, and with the objectives of our Charitable Trust.

CLUB SERVICE

Under PE James Wheeler’s leadership, the Club Service Committee’s weekly set-up of our facility has been key for our meetings. David Thompson has driven our audio-visual system. Richard Perry and Brian Clarke provided high quality Guest Speakers. And the display of our traditional banners was upgraded to make this, our own home that few Rotary Clubs have, better for our special occasions. PN Murray Isdale compiled and edited the Bulletin with clarity and style. And our almoners Ron Hunter and Robin Fenwick continued their special roles with empathy and compassion.

The Committee distributed 7,000 Annie’s Fruit Bars to Hutt Valley Primary Schools. This helped to build relationships with the schools and at the same time raised money for the KidsCan charity.

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Under Kathy Bryant’s leadership the Education & Employment Committee continued our support for students at all levels of education.

In support of primary schools, we had two Duffy Book assemblies at Rata Street School as well as a special event to celebrate 21 years of this Programme together with RC Hutt Valley. For the seventh year we presented Usborne Dictionaries to year-4 pupils at St Michaels, Taita Central, Pomare and Naenae Primary Schools.

We sponsored a Naenae College pupil, Daniel Collins, for the Rotary Youth Programme of Enrichment (RYPEN), and we helped another, Shania Smith, with finances for travel to study in Germany. We provided \$1,000 scholarships to assist two students, Michael Ladd and Jordana Zhu, with their tertiary studies, and we helped with judging of the MaiBiz event at Naenae College. This three-day programme allowed some 80 students to learn some business skills. We also sponsored a former Sacred Heart College student, Maddy van Woerkem, for the Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) course, and a Hutt Valley High student, Finn Dollimore to spend a year overseas through the Rotary International Youth Exchange (RYE) programme in the coming year.

We formed a new relationship with the Hutt Valley Activity Centre that caters for year-9 to year-11 students who struggle with other forms of schooling and are at risk of low educational outcomes. We visited HVAC twice and obtained a District Grant to purchase nine Chromebooks so that the students can maintain IT skills while away from their regular schools and also complete Correspondence School assignments.

The Club was pleased to present a Pride of Workmanship Award to Reah's Clothing Alterations in Lower Hutt. It was surprising to discover how many Members use their services and admire their skill and attention to detail.

The Committee ran a quiz night, raising over \$1,500 with some support from Whittaker's Chocolate. And, jointly with the International Committee, it held a movie night, for fellowship and fundraising.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Under Linda Birch's leadership, the Health & Wellbeing Committee invited Russell Simpson, from Hutt Valley District Health Board, to help identify needs and how they might be addressed. Out of this grew two initiatives:

- a) The Healthy Homes Project provides multi-lingual information for tenant and landlords on the government's under-utilised home insulation scheme, and acts as advocates on behalf of tenants. Working with Hutt City Council, we now have hard data to identify those who can benefit from this scheme.
- b) The Heaters in Homes Project helps to get heating into houses once they are insulated. We have so far put \$3,000 into this initiative.

This committee organised volunteer collectors for Samaritans, Parkinson's, Arthritis NZ, Poppy Day, and Life Flight Trust, made a donation to Heart Kids Day Out and supported the Network for a Violence-Free Hutt Valley group's one-day course for vulnerable women in the local area. We supported the Stroke Foundation and Wellington Free Ambulance with their blood-pressure monitoring campaign and we collected parcels donated by Warehouse customers in Petone, Wainuiomata, Lower

Hutt and Upper Hutt and delivered them to Women's Refuges so that those women, and their children, might have a better Christmas.

We were awarded a District Grant to help the Hutt Valley Samaritans with their training programme, and four of our Members volunteered for their Management Committee. But these efforts to keep Hutt Valley Samaritans in existence were in vain. Due to the shortage of essential senior mentors, they were forced to close down. At least we tried.

The Committee started a Saturday car boot sale. This raised the profile of Rotary, provided about a half of the funds for the home heaters, and has the potential to grow into a major fund-raiser. Absie Crook's monthly meat raffles also belong to this Committee.

ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC AMENITIES

The Environment & Public Amenities Committee was new this year and, perhaps not too surprisingly, Dave Comparini and his team found progress was quite challenging.

We joined Hutt City Council's initiative "Plant Hutt City Beautiful Sub-Committee". While there has been a lot of enthusiasm, there has been less action due to the unavailability of key people. The aim is to grow flowering plants from seed in public and private gardens to encourage the propagation of bees. Financial support is available from the Council and many environmental organisations, but the project needs a leader with the time.

Amenities at Avalon Park are now enhanced with the completion of the new carpark area and swale at the Pavilion. Rotary and Lions helped to review the design and we are pleased some of our recommendations influenced the finished work. We are also involved in the development of the playground and changes to the Pavilion.

We started a fledgling Off-road Fun Cycle Ride one Saturday a month. We plan for this to grow by including members from other Rotary clubs in the greater Wellington area and possible support from Hutt City Council through its Leisure Active Company.

The Committee continued to sell Personal Emergency Packs, sell Xmas Puddings, and run the monthly book sale that not only allows books to be recycled, but keeps cash coming in.

INTERNATIONAL

A major US\$440,000 (NZ\$650,000) project, driven strongly by Colin Alford, to help the Rural Centre of Human Interests (RUCHI) in India could not proceed despite support from MFAT and the Rotary Foundation because of a totally unresolvable impasse between RNZWCS and the District Foundation Chair in India. However, before that outcome, our Board gave the project a huge amount of attention, devising ways to mitigate the risks given the project's magnitude, its enduring nature spanning four Rotary years, and the underwriting and indemnification required by the Rotary

Foundation. However, at a different scale, we easily managed to support a small RUCHI project related to water management.

Under Stephen Falvey's leadership, the Committee looked for a Pacific Island project, but with little initial success. We continued our support of Emergency Response Kits by buying seven. Fortunately, near year-end, a project came to our attention that we could inherit from the former RC Harbour City. This programme, developed by NZ Aid, is about basic education for children in Vanuatu on hygiene and health, healthy food choices, self-esteem, avoiding pregnancy in the early teens, and includes blood pressure and diabetes checks by technicians from the local hospital.

With IPP Jaye Howey's encouragement, we gathered \$4,300 for the Rotary Foundation, including \$2,000 for Polio Plus, from fundraising and personal donations.

The sale of used wooden wine barrels, cut in half for use as planters etc, and donated by Wim Julicher, turned out to be lucrative. And, jointly with the Education & Employment Committee, a movie night was held for fellowship and fundraising.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Our Christmas Trailer Raffle, organised by Shelley Bryant, raised about \$13,000 nett, a little lower than normal, but this was consistent with the retailers in the mall also having a poorer season than usual. The beneficiaries this year were: Alzheimer's New Zealand, Asthma Foundation, Billy Graham Boxing Academy, Duffy Books in Homes, Eastern Hutt Inner Wheel, Hutt Valley Activity Centre, Hutt Valley Samaritans, Naenae College Scholarships, Parkinson's Society, Regional Public Health's Housing Assessment & Advisory Service for home heating, Ronald MacDonald House, Te Omanga Hospice, Usborne Dictionaries 4 Life, and Victim Support Lower Hutt.

Our Twilight Golf Tournament, organised by Paddy Wells with great support from Brian Lummis, raised over \$11,000 for Te Omanga Hospice.

Under Tony Poole's leadership, from October through March, we helped RC Wainuiomata with their Book Fair. This has historically provided good revenue for that Club which has now chosen to close. We helped them (a) because they needed the support independently of any closure, and (b) to see what would be involved should we wish to take it over as a new major fund-raiser. However those of us who contributed saw how much work was involved, a truly prodigious amount, and we decided to offer support to the Wainuiomata Lions Club who wanted to run it.

FRIENDSHIP

Our main opportunity for developing friendships remained our weekly dinner meetings with Guest Speakers. Additional social activities, with varying levels of support from Members, have been the Round the Bays fun run/walk, ten-pin bowling, Committee dinners, Club and Inner Wheel quiz nights, off-road fun cycling, monthly coffee/lunch get-togethers, and a three-day Forgotten World 20-Tunnel Rail-Cart Tour from Whangamomona to Taumarunui.

FINANCES

CHARITABLE PURPOSES

This past year \$53,000 was raised for charitable purposes and \$58,000 was disbursed. This \$5,000 drawdown of funds was intentional as, with input from a survey of Members, the Board concluded that the \$30,000 that our charitable projects and trust accounts were jointly holding was at least \$10,000 more than necessary. As a Presidential initiative, a further \$4,500 was therefore committed as a donation early in the coming year to the Rotary Clubs of Greater Wellington Free Ambulance Trust. This was our first instalment on a multi-year multi-Club project to purchase a Rotary-branded vehicle for Wellington Free Ambulance.

These charitable purposes funds have been accumulating, probably in stops and starts, during the ten years I have been a Member, despite their being donated to us to address community needs. I believe that keeping a reserve of even \$20,000, the average of Members' survey responses, is still a conservative position. Indeed, there would have to be a significant change of the Club's culture for a large portion of a \$20,000 reserve ever to be required. The Club culture is quite risk averse and there is little chance of agreement to any portfolio of projects that would require over \$10,000 of seed funding. And in this context, should an emergency arise, the other major asset of the Club, our Members' generosity, cannot be overlooked as history had shown when a pressing need has been identified.

INCORPORATED SOCIETY

As in the previous year, funds in our Incorporated Society's administration account (meetings, fellowship, etc.) were always above \$9,000 at the end of each month. In addition, the Board also maintained the previous policy of ensuring a minimum of \$8,000 was retained in the Society's projects account for cash-flow purposes. In the absence of any debt, fixed (i.e. long-term) or contingent liabilities (e.g. asset maintenance), these amounts, coming jointly to \$17,000, constituted a prudent reserve of about a quarter of the Society's annual \$66,000 expenses nett of the per-capita levies collected from Members on behalf of the Rotary District and Rotary International. The Club therefore remained in good financial shape and, thanks to Treasurer Dave Morris's careful work, we know where we are and that we can afford to do more.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Staying in touch with our community

We need to stay close to our community so that we will make good funding decisions. It worries me when I hear of Clubs who seem to have more money in the bank than they know what to do with. This is a sign of losing touch. As noted above, it was incredibly useful to receive Members' feedback from an email survey and to take time out one evening to discuss the level of funds we need to hold. The outcome was that we readily identified another \$10,000 of community needs that may have otherwise gone unmet, and we saw that we could address them without prejudicing future opportunities.

Membership

Membership numbers continued to decrease, albeit slowly. This is not because of disengaged people leaving, but because recruitment has slowed. It is finally picking up, perhaps in response to the time we took one evening to discuss the issue. In the long run, the best way to ensure we are the right size is to stay connected with our community and serve it consistently with our purpose. Publicity is also crucial, and we must thank Robert Sinclair for the wallet cards he produced and donated. They are really useful to give to potential members and we need to carry a couple with us always.

Working with other Rotary Clubs

We don't have to work on our own. Rotary operates at local, regional, national, and international scales under the single brand. Our examples of this have been working with RC Hutt Valley on Duffy Books for 21 years, and in this year working with RC Wainuiomata to explore a potential major project and adopting RC Harbour City's Vanuatu project. I intend to continue to work personally with RC Port Nicholson and other Clubs to support Wellington Free Ambulance. This may counter the saying that we have in Rotary, that there is nothing so past as a Past President.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND AWARDS

We presented token gifts to Chalet catering staff in appreciation for their work at every single meeting.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to:

- Shelley Bryant – For organising the Christmas Raffle
- Paddy Wells and Annette Drury – For organising the Te Omanga Golf Tournament
- Tony Poole – For exploring a new Major Fundraising Project
- David Gledhill – For commitment to Rotary and Innovative Fund-Raising
- John Terris – For driving the Healthy Homes Project

The Health and Wellbeing Committee was awarded the Committee Cup of 2015 for its sterling efforts, including the Healthy Homes Project.

I wish to thank PDG John Cole, IPP Jaye Howey, and PP Ron Hunter, for the support they have provided me personally this year. They helped me enormously through some difficult phases. May I also thank all of our Board Members for their dedication, and may I close by thanking all Members whose contributions have made this a great year - thank you all!
