

Recognition for a lifetime of service

WARREN GAMBLE

Russell Egan's father gave him little choice about joining a new Rotary club in Nelson.

Egan had started up a panelbeating business in the city when his father, an enthusiastic Rotarian, got talking to a customer wearing the distinctive Rotary wheel badge.

"He said I just added you as a charter member of a new club," Egan recalls his father saying. "You better go, you will enjoy it."

Egan took his father's advice.

The customer was C.T. Webley who set up the Nelson West Rotary Club in 1966, with Egan as one of the charter members.

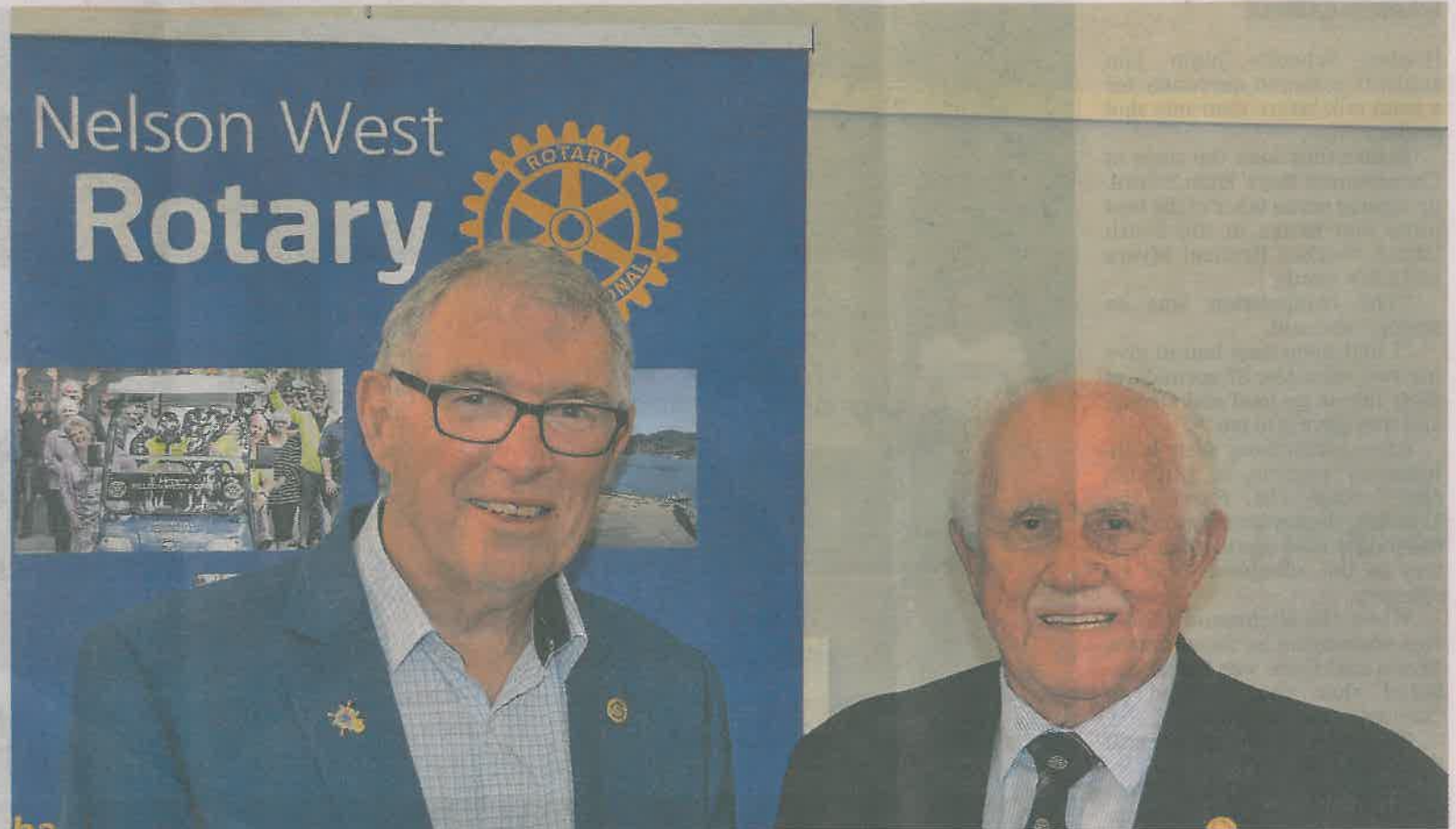
Fifty-three years later, Egan's unstinting service with the club has been recognised with one of the organisation's highest accolades, a rare double sapphire pin to his Paul Harris Fellow award.

"It's a great honour," said Egan.

He became a Paul Harris Fellow in 1997 and was awarded his first sapphire pin in 2006.

The awards recognise his community service that includes numerous Rotary projects, including one that he is literally still driving, the shuttle buggy service at Nelson Hospital.

The service was started in 2006 and this year, thanks to a \$5000 donation from Nelson West Rotary, a new buggy was bought to ferry patients from the



District Rotary governor Gary Hopkinson, left, presents Nelson West Rotary member Russell Egan with a double sapphire pin to his Paul Harris Fellow award.

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carpark to the hospital. Several of the club's members and past members volunteer as drivers for the service, including Egan, who is still pursuing further enhancements, including a solar panel on the buggy roof.

The former Nelson city councillor and lifelong car enthusiast said the fellowship of his fellow Rotarians had helped him personally and professionally, and the projects had also been rewarding.

"It's really nice to be able to do those things and look back and say it's a job well done."

And yes, his father was right.

"I still enjoy it," Egan said.

Nelson West Rotary member Murray Butler, who presented

Egan's award, said it was the first double sapphire pin given at the club.

"He's a great bloke, a great Nelsonian and someone I'm proud to be a Rotarian with," he said.