

## FROM THE DG

### What a Month April Has Been!

First, a quick recap on the District Conference – I hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as I did (though I might be a little biased!).



The DV Walk on Friday night was an incredible start to the weekend – seeing everyone walking in the rain and then hearing such powerful, thought-provoking speakers was truly moving.



During the opening formalities, I had the honour of presenting Rotarian Albert Benfer (RC Cleveland) with the *Rotary International Service Above Self Award*. Albert is a truly deserving recipient – not only for his tireless work within Rotary, but also his contributions to the Redlands

and beyond. He has made a difference in countless lives. Congratulations, Albert!



Our keynote speakers were outstanding, and it was inspiring to see clubs share insights on community projects, sustainability, and leadership

development. The House of Friendship was buzzing with information and connections – a great showcase of Rotary's reach and impact.



Saturday night was a real highlight – from the energetic dance group to DJ Krazy Kevin keeping everyone on the dance floor. And didn't everyone look fabulous in their Gatsby attire?





The conference was a wonderful reflection of the dedication and passion within our district. A huge *thank you* to all members of the Conference Committee – your hard work made the weekend a great success.



### From Toowoomba to Hobart

Following the conference, John and I headed to Hobart for a Governor's reception for the *Windeward Bound East Coast Youth Challenge*.

This exciting initiative, presented by Rotary and Windeward Bound, will offer 200 young Australians the chance to develop leadership skills aboard the STV *Windeward Bound*. The 10-day voyage promotes inclusiveness, teamwork, and personal growth – a truly transformative experience.

The ship will travel from Hobart to Mackay and back, delivering 10 life-changing voyages. If you'd like to sponsor a participant or learn more, contact Chris Ellis from Sunnybank Rotary Club at **0419 487 737** or visit [Windeward Bound's website](#).

### Western Queensland Floods

At the end of March, heavy rain led to devastating floods across Western Queensland, from Longreach to Thargomindah. Communities were cut off, towns evacuated, and graziers have suffered catastrophic stock losses.

While floodwaters are now receding, the damage is extensive. Fencing and road infrastructure have been severely affected, and helicopters have been used to move cattle – though tragically, many were lost.

The emotional toll is significant, and recovery will take time.

Districts 9560 and 9620 have joined forces to help. A **Rotary Foundation Disaster Grant (US\$25,000)** and a **RAWCS grant (\$50,000)** have been approved. These funds will be used to provide debit cards to those in need. Many clubs, both within and beyond our districts, have generously contributed to the **D9560 Disaster Fund**, supporting both immediate needs and long-term mental health recovery.

PDGs Patrice Robinson and Neil Black are leading a joint committee with representatives from the impacted communities of Longreach, Quilpie, and Thargomindah to assess and respond to local needs.

If you'd like to help, please consider making a donation – and perhaps plan a road trip out west in the near future to support these resilient communities.

For more information and ways to assist, please check recent editions of *The Gist*.

### Easter Reflections

We also celebrated Easter this month – a time to pause and enjoy moments with loved ones, indulge in chocolate, and perhaps take a break.

But at its heart, Easter is a deeply meaningful Christian celebration of renewal and hope, marking the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the end of Holy Week. I hope you found some peace and joy during your Easter.

## Looking Ahead

As I write this from Dalby, DGE Mark is presenting his Western PETS/District Assembly – a timely reminder that a new Rotary year is just around the corner!

After enjoying a rather wet ANZAC Day, it's a beautiful day here, and tomorrow John and I head to Chinchilla, where I'll be participating in a class at their Arts Weekend – something I'm really looking forward to.

Enjoy your long weekend, everyone – and let's see what May has in store!

Warm regards,

*DG Sue*

District Governor 2024–2025

For those who would like to see all the photos entered in the Conference Photo Competition, this is the link that Roger Klaassen has given me. (Editor)

<https://photocomp.rotary9620.org/ShowPics.php>

## PRESIDENT ELECT TRAINING AND DISTRICT ASSEMBLY 2025

### INTERNATIONAL PETS



The Island Presidents Elect attended their training days prior to the District Conference where 16 representatives of the clubs were present, this included the two Community Corps and Honiara Rotaract Club. A very positive training session of two days was held with total participation from all. International PETS is different from Mainland PETS as we discuss how we can help each other, our leadership styles, what is required in the Islands to assist them,

how can clubs become involved with more projects and the list continues.

Each club makes a presentation to all attendees on what they are doing and where we can help them. The two largest clubs, Boroko and Port Moresby will be offering their assistance to ensure all clubs are compliant under the new PNG Government financial regulations. This will make it a bit easier for clubs to run as well. Great two days and we wish the new PE's all the best.

### EASTERN PETS/DISTRICT ASSEMBLY



42 Presidents Elect supported by a further 39 Club Board members or Club Members attended the Eastern PETS Assembly in Caboolture. We were fortunate enough to have an Area Governors (AGs) present so the attendees could break into their own clusters. It was encouraging to witness the interaction, participation and conversations that were generated during the break out sessions.

We, as the District Leadership Team, advise all PE's that it is not our role to tell them how to be a President or how to run their club over the next 12 months, we are there to provide enough information for them to be able to be a great leader of their club, to bring their members along with them and to have members actively engaged. We provide guidance and some resources to make your task easier.

### WESTERN PETS/DISTRICT ASSMEBLY

A further 16 Presidents Elect and 10 club representatives attended our leadership and development session in Daly last Saturday where we were fortunate enough to have Anke Timm Philanthropy Supervisor, THE ROTARY FOUNDATION - South Pacific and Philippines who gave us a lot to think about and some questions to be discussed amongst the clubs on how we can make our Foundation even stronger. Once



again, the participation from all attendees was excellent.

We encourage all PE's and Board members to do the training in Rotary Learning Centre that RI has requested they all do as it is becoming a requirement. You will be surprised by how much information is provided in these training modules. We also encourage you to use the information in the workbooks to engage members on how to make your clubs stronger, perhaps at a few different club meetings. Do some training modules as a club – seek input from all.

*John Mulraney  
Learning & Development Facilitator 2024-2025*

## The Western QLD Flood Appeal a collaboration between Rotary Districts 9560 and 9620

Natural disasters have a way of striking without warning, leaving behind trails of devastation and despair. This year, unprecedented floods have wreaked havoc across QLD displacing families and obliterating homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods. Many families are now homeless. The size of the affected area is twice the size of Victoria and four times the size of the UK. In the face of such overwhelming adversity, it is our collective responsibility to extend a helping hand and support those who have lost everything.



Farmers have lost livestock, infrastructure, machinery, tools and so much more in the form of a lifetime of breeding genetics. Small businesses, the backbone of local economies, have been shattered. Some may never reopen. The psychological toll is immense, with many struggling to cope with the magnitude of what they are facing.

In response to this crisis, we have launched a comprehensive flood appeal aimed at providing immediate and long-term assistance to affected

communities. The Committee coordinating this effort has members who are key community members in the areas of Longreach, Thargomindah, Quilpie, and surrounds.

To date just under \$500,000 has been raised. This includes individual/club donations, the contributions of debit cards from RAWCS, and the Rotary Foundation Disaster grant.

The Committee's aim in the first instance is to provide funds for emergency relief. This is in the form of a one-off cash advance overseen by the two local Rotary clubs and then distribution of debit cards. When the time is right, social wellbeing events will be organised as the communities identify they are ready for such events. The long-term mental health and wellbeing of those affected is very much on the long-term planning of this committee.



### How can you help?

Financial contributions at this stage are making a significant difference and are having the most impact.



Please research and ask the question prior to sending out a lot "stuff". While well-meaning it can create an absolute headache for those coordinating efforts in the area.

If there are people who have skills that would be helpful getting communities on their feet, the community committee members can assess your offer in the light of what is needed. Remember at this stage you would need to be completely self-sufficient.



As in the drought time we will be looking at initiatives like "Adopt a Town".

We know that the overwhelming care and concern of Rotary will go a long way in building hope and help towards a more resilient future for those affected.

Please contact us on the contacts provided below, with questions or offers of help and we will endeavour to guide you how best to assist.

- **District 9560 Disaster Fund Account (please note this a joint District 9560 and 9620 appeal)**  
(No tax deduction available – suitable for Rotary clubs and district donations for immediate funding)  
**BSB: 633000 | Account Number: 186414595**

- **Rotary Australia Community World Service (RAWCS)**  
(Tax deductible in Australia – suitable for individual donors)  
**Appeal No. 33-2023-24: Flood Disaster Appeal Fund - Australia (RARF)** Donate via:  
<https://directory.rawcs.com.au/33-2023-24>

PDG Patrice Robinson  
MOB: 0412 756 455  
[Patricerot30@gmail.com](mailto:Patricerot30@gmail.com)

PDG Neil Black  
MOB: 0408 246 815  
[DG2020-2021@hotmail.com](mailto:DG2020-2021@hotmail.com)

## ROTARY CLUB OF BRISBANE INNER NORTH TRIPLE B PROJECT

When former Windsor resident and registered nurse Val Smith-Oar was last in Australia, she came and spoke to the Rotary Club of Brisbane Inner North about the Triple B Project (patients who suffer Burns, Bingot (Cleft lip and / or Palate) and Bulate (Worms) ) in Zambales in the Philippines. [www.triplebcareprojects.org](http://www.triplebcareprojects.org)

Val established the project over 10 years ago following research she was undertaking as part of her studies at the University of Queensland. After completing her research, she stayed in the Philippines and began helping patients in need in her small kitchen. Today "Triple B" assists hundreds of patients annually.

In 2014 the "Triple B" project became a beneficiary project of RAWCS and now also has support of other organisations based in Australia, New Zealand, and the UK, including Interplast, Helping Children Smile and H.O.P.E Foundation International as there is no government funding available.

Following Val's presentation to RC Brisbane Inner North she was asked how our club could support the project. Initially she indicated a donation of \$200 would provide enough consumables (bandages, ointments, and creams) for a couple of months.

However, when we asked what the project really needed, she indicated there were plans to start a two-year fundraising campaign to replace the existing 10-year-old ambulance. In Zambales an ambulance is a purpose-built motorbike and



sidecar to allow access through narrow alleys, poorly maintained roads and motorbikes have much lower running costs.

The club agreed to provide the funds for the ambulance, which was forwarded via RAWCS, and over the period of 6 months the "Triple B" Ambulance was built in Zambales by local workers and was finally commissioned in April 2025. To assist with the upkeep the club also donated some additional funds for fuel and parts.



If you would like to know more about the "Triple B Project", Val Smith-Oar will be in Australia in May and speaking at our next meeting on 1 May at [Grange Social](https://www.grangesocial.com.au) so - please come and join us, or learn more about the project at

[www.triplecareprojects.org](http://www.triplecareprojects.org)

These photos show an ambulance in its stages of manufacture and Val trying one out.



Chris Goninon  
RC of Brisbane Inner North



## IPDG PAUL PUSHING BOUNDARIES

In February this year IPDG Paul set off to Tanzania to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. It was a bucket list trek Paul had wanted to do since he trekked to Everest Base Camp in 2019, but COVID and then his District role delayed his earlier plans. Then in 2024, ShelterBox Australia launched its annual fundraising trek for 2025 and chose Kilimanjaro. So, Paul signed up and started training. 'I enjoy bush walking and multi day treks locally but the challenge to set a goal to do something that tests my boundaries is always something I am up for.'



Paul has learned that nothing grows in a comfort zone, so he is always up to step out of his comfort zone and push himself on something new and different. Kilimanjaro is the tallest mountain in the world where a person can actually walk to the top. Of course, they have to be fit and able. Plus, there is the challenge of the high altitude which is something you cannot train for.



Paul with his fellow trekkers as they prepare to depart on their trek. Note the banner celebrating 25 years of ShelterBox.

Added to the goal of conquering Kilimanjaro was the challenge to raise funds for ShelterBox. Paul decided the goal for this challenge would be 5895. That number is the height of Kilimanjaro in metres, and a good fund-raising target to have.



First day in the rain forest.

As many now know, Paul received fantastic support from family and friends which included many Rotarians and Rotary Clubs. His fund raising quickly soared past the original target and reached \$10,300 by the time he set off on the trek.



Simba Camp first night

Paul joined five others on the fund-raising trek and the team reached Kilimanjaro base camp (at 4,700 metres) in four days without difficulty. Starting in rain forest the team gradually saw the vegetation decrease and disappear as they



ascended and night time temperatures quickly fell below zero. By the fourth night the team was ready and excited to start a 6 hour night time summit climb of the final 1200 metre starting at midnight.



*Camp Night Two and Paul on Day Three*



Unfortunately to goal of the summit was not to be for two of the six with one having to descend about 500 metres from the top, and then Paul succumbed to altitude sickness 300 metres from the summit and was forced to descend.

Worse for Paul was that he had developed a pulmonary oedema and with fluid in his lungs once he got down to base camp, he had to be medevac to Moshi Hospital where he fortunately made a good and quick recovery.



*Setting off on Day Four*

*Base Camp  
– Kibo  
Camp  
4720m*



Paul is happy with the outcome, as he says "It was about the journey not the destination, and while it might be a disappointment that I did not summit, I have been higher (over 5500 metres) than I had done previously and I now know my limits in that respect." For Paul, the journey was more about supporting ShelterBox, and here he exceeded his expectations thanks to the generosity of his donors. This amount of money will have helped many people in need, and this is what it is all about.

Photos show parts of Paul's journey. Paul is also available to share his story at club meetings.

*The four  
that made  
it to the  
summit.*



*IPDG Paul  
Roger  
RC of  
Greater  
Springfield*



# BOWELSCAN NEWS

Congratulations to all those who contributed to successful information displays in House of Friendship/Showcase, and of course to my Conference Team who encouraged these displays.

One highlight was the announcement of District's initiative to help prevent bowel cancer, by raising awareness of the need for adults to test regularly, preferably annually.



John Lehane at District Conference in Toowoomba Display 2025. Photo courtesy Paul Ying

My Team can make publicity flyers and information available to all Rotary Clubs in District as no one is immune from testing positive to bowel cancer. For Rotary Clubs in Queensland, we now have over 2000 kits that can be made available in 2025 for Clubs to distribute free to those who do not receive free biennial kits from the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program.

SEND YOUR CLUBS ORDER by 15/5/2025 to [rotarybowelscan@hotmail.com](mailto:rotarybowelscan@hotmail.com)

Or post in time to reach: Qld Rotary Bowelscan, PO Box 1609, Cleveland, Qld, 4163.

Background: RI D9620 Bowelscan Committee has secured a grant from Queensland Gambling Community Benefit Fund together with other monies to enable District to disburse 2100 kits at no cost to recipients for use in 2025. To cover many localities, the maximum number of Kits available with each individual order is twenty. First round of allocations will be decided from Orders received at close of business 15th May 2025. Supplementary orders can be placed from the remaining stock. All orders are subject to availability and Committee decision on allocations will be final.

We support Rotarians receiving Federal Government funded kits available only to those aged 45 to 74 every two years and to create a sample and submit it to their nearest Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Centre for free analysis. Rotarians under age 45 years and over 75 do NOT receive a free kit and therefore should appreciate this offer. Under 45-year-olds are responsible for 12 % of all positives with numbers increasing. Rotarians over 75 are responsible for only 41% of positives. Bowel Cancer is no longer an old person's disease!

Tony Wills

RI District 9620 Bowelscan Committee

## QUEENSLAND BRAIN INSTITUTE UPDATE

The Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) is a premier neuroscience research facility located at the University of Queensland's St Lucia campus in Brisbane. Established in 2003 through a collaboration between UQ, the Queensland Government, and philanthropist Chuck Feeney, QBI has grown into a global leader in brain research.

To celebrate the Centenary of Rotary in Queensland in 2023 a relationship was formed between District 9620 and QBI with the initial goal to fund a Chair of Neuroscience. The initial committee was made up of Rotarians and Rotaractors from the District but quickly attracted support from the other two districts in Queensland. The Rotary Club of Brisbane, our centenary club, has provided the financial and administrative support together with the majority of the initial committee members.

QBI is under the directorship of a fellow Rotarian, Professor Pankaj Sah who leads a team of over 300 researchers, students, and support staff dedicated to understanding the brain in health and disease. The institute's research encompasses a broad spectrum of neuroscience, including brain development and plasticity, cognition and behaviour, mental health, dementia and ageing, and brain injury.

In 2025 our focus has shifted to providing funds to assist research into understanding and developing a cure for dementia. Dementia is now seen as the number one killer of Queenslanders and 1 in 12 Rotarians will succumb to this disease before they die.

Rotarians play a vital role in supporting the Queensland Brain Institute's (QBI) cutting-edge



research into brain health and diseases, particularly dementia and other neurological conditions. There are a number of avenues through which Rotarians can contribute to QBI's mission:

### 1. Join or Expand Fundraising Initiatives

Rotary clubs have been integral to fundraising efforts for QBI. One prominent example is the "Queensland Centenary Breakthrough Project," a state-wide initiative aimed at raising \$5 million by 2025 to establish an endowed Chair in Neuroscience at QBI. Rotarians can:

- Organise local fundraising events (such as charity golf days, dinner galas, or team challenges) to engage community members.
- Leverage existing Rotary networks to set up fundraising pages where supporters can donate individually.
- Coordinate campaigns using digital and social media to broaden outreach, sharing research updates and the impact of donations directly tied to breakthroughs in dementia research.

### 2. Engage With QBI Through Events and Presentations

- Rotarian clubs are encouraged to participate in QBI-hosted events:
- Attend special presentations and speaker events that provide updates on QBI's research progress.
- Organise visits to the Institute, allowing club members and their communities to witness firsthand the research that their contributions support.
- Invite QBI researchers to speak at club meetings or local community forums to foster a stronger connection between research and community impact.

### 3. Direct Donations and Fundraising Partnerships

There are multiple ways Rotarians can contribute directly:

- Direct Donations: Rotarians can encourage individual giving through the QBI donation pages and by spreading the word about the research being undertaken. Contributions are versatile; donors can select specific research streams (e.g., dementia, motor neurone disease, mental health, or concussion research) to support.
- Corporate Sponsorships and Philanthropic Partnerships: Rotary clubs with established connections in the business community can secure matching

donations or sponsorships for major campaigns like the QBI Brain Research Endowment Fund.

- Gifts in Kind and Legacy Giving: Rotarians might also explore leaving a gift in their will or donating through legacy giving programs, ensuring long-term research sustainability.

### 4. Volunteer and Advocate

Rotarians can support QBI beyond monetary donations:

- Fundraising Volunteer Roles: Rotarians with experience in community outreach can help manage and organise fundraising events.
- Advocacy and Public Awareness: By sharing QBI's groundbreaking research on dementia and other brain disorders within their networks, Rotarians raise awareness and inspire further community involvement.



*PDG Tim Keeler, Rotarian & Professor Pankaj Sah, DG Sue Mulraney and President Andrea Murphy presenting the first \$100,000 to QBI to combat dementia.*

Rotarians are uniquely positioned to support the Queensland Brain Institute by mobilising their networks, expertise, and passion for community service. Whether it's through organising fundraising events, facilitating direct donations, or volunteering their time and advocacy, Rotarians can be a catalyst for advancements in the understanding and treatment of dementia and other neurological conditions. Their ongoing support not only aids immediate research outcomes but also builds a lasting legacy that benefits future generations.

For more detailed information or to get involved, Rotarians should connect PDG Tim Keeler on 0431 504 978 or [timkeeler.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:timkeeler.rotary@gmail.com)

*PDG Tim Keeler*



## Sip with Purpose – A Toast to Change

At **Moffatdale Ridge Wines**, we believe that great wine brings people together—and when shared with purpose, it has the power to make a real difference. That's why we are proud to introduce a **specialty selection of wines** created in partnership with **Rotary District 9620**

This initiative blends the love of fine wine with a commitment to community, supporting not one but **two impactful foundations** with every bottle sold. Whether you're enjoying a quiet moment, raising a glass in celebration, or gifting a bottle to a fellow wine lover, your purchase will contribute to **meaningful change**

### Three Wines, One Purpose

We've carefully crafted a trio of exceptional wines for this cause, available at cellar-door pricing.

For every bottle purchased, \$2 will be donated to the District Governor's Wine for Fundraising, with proceeds evenly shared between two remarkable causes:

The Rotary Foundation – Dedicated to humanitarian efforts, supporting projects that bring positive change to communities worldwide.



The Windeward Bound Foundation – Empowering young Australians through hands-on sail training aboard the STV Windeward Bound, a traditional tall ship designed to foster leadership, teamwork, and resilience in youth.

By simply choosing to enjoy a beautiful bottle of wine, you're investing in futures, strengthening communities, and supporting life-changing experiences. [learn more](#)



The cost is \$21.00 for DG Red and \$20.00 for DG White and Bubbles. There is a Special Freight cost of \$15.00 anywhere in Queensland.

## ROTARIANS KEEP TRADITIONS ALIVE

Rotarians around our District joined with their communities to commemorate ANZAC Day. Here are a few highlights.



On Friday Brisbane Inner West again supported the [Windsor & Districts Historical Society](#) ANZAC Day service providing a sausage sizzle for all the hungry attendees (over 350). All donations we received will go



to either the Historical Society or [Mates for Mates Challenge](#)



The Rotary Club of [Rotary Club of Wynnum & Manly](#) community service traditions is to prepare and serve the gunfire breakfast collaborating with the Manly Lota RSL Sub-branch. Around 200 people had a full breakfast. This year's thunderstorms dampened their clothes but not their good spirits.



A little further west the weather was sunny in Dalby, where Bob, Greg, Sara, Jane, Coco, and Glen enjoyed the parade and laid a wreath during the service.



Further west again in St George, St George Rotarians supported the ANZAC Day services in St George by taking part in the parade and commemoration service, then helped serve drinks and chips to the students who took part. Serving their community!

#### FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the ninth edition of the DG News for the 2024-25 Rotary year – where we **SHARE YOUR MAGIC!** Please submit articles (interesting and visual) to the DG News Editor, Win Salmon at [newsletter@rotary9620.org](mailto:newsletter@rotary9620.org) by 25 June for the (next and final) tenth edition.

The last edition will be a combined May/June Edition as your editor is going overseas for a month in May/June. I look forward to receiving lots of amazing stories for the last edition to showcase Sue's magical year. So, start planning what you will be sending in!



2024-25 sponsors



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