

Chapter 4

Vocational Service

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Special Vocational Projects

With the original Rotary focus on Vocation, the Club initiated two special projects and has given active support and leadership in a third.

Adult Literacy in the Small Business Workplace

In 1991 President Ralph Lee challenged the Vocational Committee to select a project that would involve all members of the Club and, as a bonus, one which could perhaps flow on to the District. Bob Ballantyne and his committee accepted that challenge and were inspired when one of the committee members related the story of a young man who had applied to become an apprentice engineer. He was so lacking in numeracy and literacy skills that he had difficulty in gaining a job so became rebellious, left home and became a street kid. Our member arranged private tuition and on learning of this, the father became very supportive and welcomed his son home. This sparked our enthusiasm and the long process of investigation commenced.

With Bob's transfer to Sydney, David Goldsmith took control of the project and with Geoff Steinicke met with social workers and experienced adult literacy teachers and interviewed employers in the Lexton Road area. Progress was slow, but a commitment for support from President-Elect Ron Phillips allowed planning to proceed.

Four employers expressed their willingness to have staff participate and ACI Glass offered their staff amenities for a meeting place. The committee identified a most experienced teacher in Ms Sue Naylor, then of Swinburne Institute Workplace Skills Unit, who fully supported the program as a Research and Development project. In turn Sue arranged for a suitable class teacher, Mrs Cheryl Iser. Sue and Cheryl interviewed 50 employees who were nominated by their employers and selected the 15 who they considered were most likely to benefit based upon their needs and willingness to participate.

The course, the content for which focussed on literacy needs relating to communication skills in the small business workplace, commenced on 25 July 1991 and was held for two hours weekly from 7:30am over a 20-week period. Members of the Vocational Committee were able to observe the course in action.

All participants who completed the course expressed very positive attitudes and encouraged their colleagues to volunteer for future courses. ACI Glass management was so impressed with the work outcomes that they sponsored further courses for their afternoon and evening shifts.

The Victorian Education Foundation showed their support by taking the unprecedented step of making a \$2,000 grant to the Club for Sue and her staff to complete a formal evaluation report and submit it to a National Conference on Adult Literacy.



David Goldsmith (third from left), Cheryl Iser (Teacher) and Sue Naylor (Coordinator) (centre) and Ron Phillips (third from right) with Literacy class graduates and ACI Manager

The State Training Board subsequently made available a special grant of \$15,000 to Swinburne to enable Sue to undertake further research into this “High Street” learning model.

This report, together with a special report written by David Goldsmith was submitted to District as a basis for further development by other clubs in the district and was so well received that our Club was awarded the District Vocational award for 1991-92.

Ron Liner recalls Kevin Maunder’s Year as President

One of the fondest memories I have of a Past President is of Kevin Maunder, who was renowned for his two diaries, one for Rotary meetings and one for business. On a few occasions he missed Rotary meetings because he only had his business diary with him; heaven knows how many business meetings Kevin missed because he only had his Rotary diary with him? I hope he can still manage a smile when he reads this because of some of the heartache I caused him during his year in office.

Job Search Seminar

With unemployment rife in 1991-92, the Vocational Service committee embarked upon investigation that led to the organisation of a successful Job Search Seminar. The seminar was aimed at mature adults who had been retrenched or who were deliberately seeking a career change. Research identified resource information from KPMG and an experienced presenter in Stuart Brinkworth of Swinburne Institute.

The course was held in May 1992 over three consecutive Wednesday nights from 7 pm to 10 pm at Marwal Avenue. A sub-committee consisting of Stuart Brinkworth, Rob Head, Gerry Spencer and Bob McCann, with David Goldsmith as Chairman, organised the program, interviewed and selected the participants who had responded to newspaper advertisements. 36 places were offered and 7 were placed on a waiting list. Requests for enrolment continued and far exceeded what we could provide for.

At each session information and ideas were presented and small group discussions followed led by members of our team. John Arrowsmith (Amcor), John Mollison and Ron Ritter also led sessions.

The response from participants was encouraging and all grew in confidence, and some gained employment during the course. All sought assistance in the preparation of their resumés. Among their comments they expressed how unprepared they had been for the task of seeking employment and that the course had helped them develop their interview skills. This was further confirmed at follow-up interviews held four weeks later.

In the following year a seminar was held for 13 participants who for the most part had above-average qualifications. Rob Head and Ron Ritter again led this worthwhile activity. Other clubs, too, requested the use of our notes so again we felt very gratified by this achievement.

A special memory from John Gartlan

Appropriate Dress for Rotary Meetings

From time to time concern is expressed when members fail to wear a tie in contravention of the Kew Golf Club dining room dress code. Some members will recall that it was Les Fleming, who was a member for about 18 months up to June 1996, who on one night appeared fully robed as a Bedouin Sheik, and we never did really find out why!!

Operation Livewire

Operation Livewire assists young Australians between the ages of 18 and 25 to establish their own businesses. Rotarians provide guidance and practical advice by acting as mentors for each entrant as they develop their ideas and prepare a business plan. Shell Australia awards cash prizes to the value of \$10,000 in each State.

We first participated in Operation Livewire as mentors in 1993-94. In 1994-95 Rob Head and John McBride with assistance from Geoff Dwyer, Stan Hibbert and Max Hunter worked with two groups who were aiming to set up in virtual reality equipment and in computer design services respectively. This involved fortnightly meetings over a period of 10 weeks in which business plans were developed and reviewed, and market surveys appraised. The results obtained were excellent with one of the groups winning a State award of \$5,000 and the other being highly commended.

In 1995-96 projects examined included the development of Outback Adventure Tours and Video Production for Small Businesses with Rob Head and David Morris as mentors. In consideration at State level one of these received a Certificate of Commendation.



Bruce McIver (Chairman), Ron Phillips and Richard Johns (Mentors) and Pres Clive Hughes with 1996 Livewire candidate Tracy Stuart and 1995 winning nominee Simone Richter

Our participation in the project has continued over the years with Rob Head and Geoff Steinicke taking a major role.

Examples of other projects proposed by participants were a country-based Tourist Carriage Service, an Internet Café/Training Centre, and Designer Labelling, but proposers had either not conducted adequate market surveys or had a lack of understanding of genuine business potential.

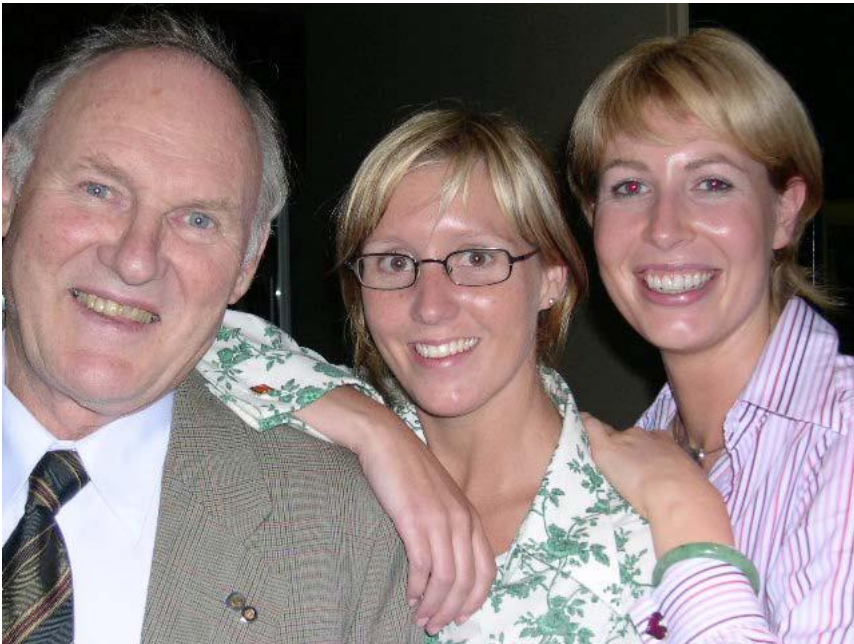
The outcomes for our Livewire nominees have ranged from winning the overall award as in 1994-95 to some not completing their business plan by the due date. However, those that have not proceeded to presenting a business plan for assessment have still gained valuable life skills from their participation, and from the guidance of our supporting Rotarians.

In 2003, our nominees for the Shell Livewire Awards were Jacquie McGowan and Amanda Armstrong. Their business involved them in supplying limited edition French-cuffed business shirts in Melbourne's CBD.



Jacqui McGowan and Amanda Armstrong

Geoff Steinicke was the girls' mentor, giving them an enormous amount of guidance throughout the process of forming a business plan and getting the business up and running. Well done Geoff and congratulations girls on beating some very stiff competition to go on and win the National Title.



A very proud Geoff Steinicke with the National Winners

Shine-on-Awards

For several years, since their establishment in the 1990's, the Club was actively involved with the Shine-on-Awards.

PP David Goldsmith was on the first District Committee of the Awards and Eve Lustig was one of our early nominations for the work she did for Vision Australia.

J B Were became an early sponsor for the annual event.

The Awards are given to people with disabilities who are themselves an inspiration to others.

The Club's nomination in 2004 was Mr. Allen Maher who has had MS for the past nine years, and who, with his wife Dorothy, have been foster parents to a number of children from troubled backgrounds. Allen also runs a successful real estate business.



Allen Maher and wife Dorothy with Nino Sofra

In 2005, Dorothy Hamilton became the first nomination from our Club to win the major award from a large field of worthy nominees. Dorothy is recognized internationally as a skilled transcriber of Braille music and uses the latest computer technology for this work which greatly assists visually impaired people to learn to play musical instruments.

A John Moyle Special Moment!

*Comrade **John Moyle** had made it safely to Vladivostok on one trip and on arrival had 13 stitches removed from a cut in his hand by a friendly dentist. Is that what you call a hand-to-mouth existence?!!*

Internet Cafe

In 2004, a brainchild of John Magor, and supported by the Vocational Director, Jim Studebaker, the idea of a neighbourhood internet café came into being. The café was set up at the Unicare Neighbourhood House in North Balwyn, and, with the generosity of Microsoft, and the organisational skills of Nino Sofra, it proved to be a great success in making computer training available at little or no cost to local senior citizens. A great many of our older folk benefited from the computer skills they learned at the Café, especially how to use email and the internet. The knowledge of both can greatly enhance the lives of our seniors in communicating with their relatives and friends.



*President Brian Hurnard explains the workings
while Nino Sofra ponders over a problem*

Vocational Visits

Over the years the Club has enhanced its weekly program by arranging vocational visits to workplaces.

Many of these visits have included an evening meal and fellowship at the workplace and all have been enjoyed and proved of benefit to members who were able to attend. We are indebted to those members who have been able to arrange these visits and particularly to the management and staff of the organisations visited for their cooperation and most informative presentations.

In recent years, the very size of the club has caused logistical problems and severely limited the number of facilities able to accommodate visits for up to ninety members.

Among the more memorable of such visits have been:

1983-84	Ford Motor Company
1985-86	Show Ads Melbourne Stock Exchange (Randalls) Odyssey House
1987-88	Police D24 Operations Room Odyssey House
1988-89	Containers Packaging Ltd, Dandenong Association for the Blind
1991-92	North Eastern Jewish War Memorial Synagogue
1992-93	New Melbourne Stock Exchange
1993-94	Vic Roads Traffic Control Centre
1995-96	Toyota Motor Corporation Bernard O'Brien Institute of Microsurgery
1997-98	Alcoa, Point Henry
1998-99	City Link Authority Information Centre
1999-00	J.B.Were & Son, Stockbrokers
2000-01	Colonial Stadium
2001-02	Channel Seven Studios, Dandenong Mail Exchange, William Angliss College of TAFE
2002-03	The William Angliss School of Hospitality
2003-04	QPO Scotch Whisky appreciation class
2004-05	Vic Roads Traffic Management Centre, Kew
2005-06	Melrose Health Supplies, Box Hill Alfred Hospital
2006-07	Club visit to the Melbourne Cricket Ground
2007-08	Lilydale TAFE and Odyssey House

The Victoria Police Leadership Mentoring Program

In 2007/08, following the Rotary Club of Central Melbourne Sunrise's proposal of a program involving Rotary and business mentoring of Victoria Police senior officers aimed at the development of those officers' leadership skills, the District and the Victoria Police commenced a three year pilot scheme to evaluate the effectiveness of this novel Vocational Service initiative.

Its aim was to foster the theme of partnership amongst senior leaders in Rotary, business and the Victoria Police. The prime objective was to provide police leaders with a high impact development opportunity to:

- Increase their understanding of the business and service volunteer environment within the community.
- Gain an insight and understanding of different organisational approaches to leadership and service.
- Explore opportunities with mentors to probe and analyse different leadership styles, high level executive communications, problem solving and participate in programs for the disadvantaged.
- Gain insight into and form stronger links with the business community and an influential and respected community organisation such as Rotary International.

Along with selected other District clubs, the Rotary Club of North Balwyn was asked to provide a mentor and back-up mentor in each of this three year program with different Rotarians being involved each year.

In 2007/08, John Reddish and Paul Fitz were appointed mentor and back-up mentor respectively. Our Police mentoree was Inspector Graeme Arthur. Unfortunately, after Graeme had attended only one club meeting he suffered problems with his heart and had to withdraw. Not long afterwards John also had some medical problems which ultimately lead to his retirement from both the Club and Rotary.

2008/09 proved more successful. Graeme, having fully recovered, was nominated to rejoin the program with Paul Fitz as his mentor and Don Bowden as back-up. Both Graeme and Paul gained a great deal from the experience with Graeme attending at least one of our meetings each month, being our guest speaker at one meeting and he and Paul holding detailed private discussions on Rotary in general. Also, during the year, Graeme was promoted to Superintendent, appointed boss of the Horsham Police Complex and surrounding areas and joined the Horsham East Rotary Club.

In 2009/10, Inspector Michael Gliniski, a senior member of the Counter Terrorism and Coordination Unit, was selected as the Club's mentoree with Ron Phillips as mentor and David Cheney as back-up mentor. Again, it was just as successful a year as the year before with Ron and Michael gaining a great deal from the experience. Hopefully, this very powerful Vocational program will be continued when the three year pilot scheme has been fully assessed.

NBTT

Ann Kerr (as Acting Sergeant):

"A fine on all those lucky enough to have folding chairs"

Interjectors: "Folding chairs? Come again? Oh, you mean Faulding Shares!"

NBTT

Geoff Steinicke: Paul Fitz has given a number of presentations on The Rotary Foundation and I would just like to say, Paul, that the presentation on Foundation that we have just had from John Reddish is the best such presentation that I have ever heard.