

Chapter 6

International Service

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RAWCS (FAIM)

RAWCS – Rotary Australia World Community Service

FAIM – Fourth Avenue in Motion

The old name of FAIM was replaced by the name RAWCS to better describe the activities involved. Most of our members are “Life Members” of RAWCS and still pay an annual “subscription!”

However, it is the “hands-on” activities of some of our members that it is noteworthy and on which they must be congratulated.

Solomon Islands 1988

In 1988 Max Hunter joined a RAWCS team of three members who worked for two weeks in the Solomon Islands to help build a school and where possible to pass on the skills to the indigenous people. Jungle tracks, mud, heavy rain and a hot tropical climate made things difficult. Sleeping under mosquito netting at night and a lengthy walk each day to the site soon set the scene for Max’s experiences.

Max was sent to the village of Numbo on the island of Guadalcanal. Numbo has only about 100 people and because the life expectancy was only 43 years, most were quite young. Tropical fruits were plentiful and the team was well provided for by the locals. The problem of health and overseas aid is directed against the problems of malaria, TB and polio, to name a few.

The school was completed on time by the team, and the village of Numbo will benefit greatly.

Western Samoa 1993

Max’s experience was the forerunner of a visit by an eight man team of North Balwyn Rotarians to the Solomon Islands in April 1993. The members of this team were Maurice Ellis, Graham Foard, Stan Hibbert, Greg Matthews, John Moyle, Bernie Smith, John Reddish and Ron Roy. They left for Apia on 25th ^{April} and were met at Faleolo Airport by Allen Shadbolt, from Wodonga, who was a FAIM veteran and was coordinating three projects in action at that time; teams worked on a project for almost three weeks. The team was taken to the famous Aggie Grey’s hotel in Apia for the first night.

The team had left on a Sunday but due to crossing the Date Line arrived on Saturday and since Bernie had been celebrating his 60th birthday immediately prior to departure he was forced to do it all over again, with interesting consequences!

The reason for Rotary’s activity in Samoa was the devastation caused by a cyclone about one year earlier. To gain an appreciation of the level of devastation the disaster at Darwin from Cyclone Tracey in about 6 hours was nothing compared with what occurred when the Western Samoa cyclone was centred over the islands for five days of unrelenting wind and rain.



School students and families inspect the building progress

The project our team was involved in was to commence the erection of a 7-classroom school on a concrete slab from which the previous school had been swept away during the cyclone. It was in a village, Faleasiu, half way between Apia and the airport. Earlier teams had repaired the main two-storeyed building and others were to follow where our team left-off.

Accommodation was primitive to say the least and much had to be done to make the living conditions at the village habitable including the building of bunks.

Working hours were 8am to noon, lunchbreak at “home” until 2pm and work through to “pack up” time at 6 pm. A number of Samoans were always around and were fascinated by the nail guns and power saws which Gregor had arranged and they gradually gained some of the skills that would be useful to them in the future.

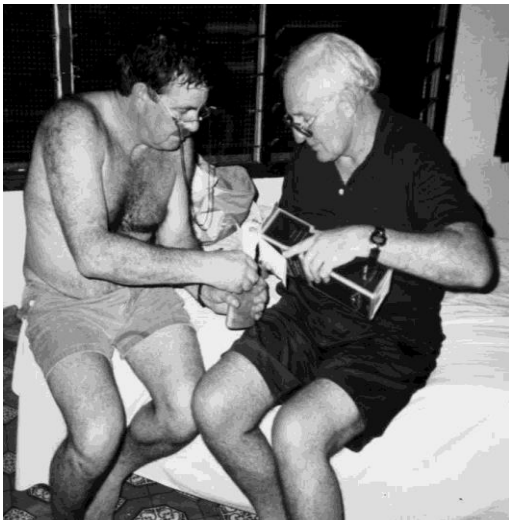
Our group of volunteers was in essence a well-balanced team. Bernie’s long experience as a builder made him the logical Project Manager. Ron and Graham are tradesmen and Greg had access to the equipment and the technical knowledge to keep it working – always a problem in the tropics. Dr. John Reddish kept the team fit and well and on the job, and the rest of the team had the common sense to watch, learn and acquire some competence, and do as they were told!

There were many experiences with the locals and with the various Church Pastors who either supported or rejected the group of infidels in their midst. Victualling arrangements were successfully made but the team was conscious that they were not eating at Argenti’s as were the rest of the Club.

Each day was much the same but the team worked and made major inroads into the task.



Our team enjoy an Aggie's boxed lunch



Gregor and Stan replenish some vital supplies

Good relations were established with Madam Mua, a member of parliament and Aggie Gray's was always a useful backstop in emergencies.

The team achieved great things and by the last week all roof trusses were in place and work was started on the roof cladding. The Australian High Commissioner, David Ritchie, visited the site as did the local building inspector and both were complimentary regarding the amount our team had achieved and the standard of the work accomplished.

The group enjoyed a number of social events including receptions for the Apia Medical Association and the captain of the Western Samoa Rugby team. They attended the

Western Samoa versus Otago Rugby match, followed by after-match drinks and dinner. They enjoyed a visit to the Australian High Commission in the hills behind Apia and attended a meeting of the Rotary Club of Apia together with all three work teams as well as a GSE team from Virginia, USA, so that the locals were well out-numbered.



*Relaxation time around the pool
A fitting conclusion to a great Rotary experience.*

At the end of the visit there were many speeches of thanks with all the local chiefs in attendance and everyone contributed to the food for the immense feast and the dancing which followed. Apparently, North Balwyn were the first to receive such warm treatment and at the end of the evening everyone left feeling honoured and privileged.



It's not all palm trees and equatorial beauty

Vanuatu

In 2003, the club responded to a request from the D9800 Rotary Australia World Community Service Committee (RAWCS) to undertake a project involving the refurbishing of a 160 bed hospital, and the construction of an eye clinic for the Port Vila Hospital in Vanuatu.



Proudly posing with their creation are Rotarians Bob Adams, Neil Ramsay, Bernie Smith, Peter Elliott, Imre Lele and Greg Ross.

Under the leadership of Bernie Smith, a team was formed, consisting of the following club members:-

- Bernie Smith as Team Leader;
- Peter Elliott who was in charge of dealing with outgoing Customs in Sydney;
- Greg Ross who negotiated with Port Vila Customs to obtain prompt customs, duty free clearances for future materials involved in the project;
- Imre Lele as site engineer, salvaging and refurbishing a concrete mixer, and getting hot water for the showers;
- "Doctor" Nino Sofra who provided medical and first aid support;
- Neil Ramsay who handled the finances and daily shopping for essential supplies and equipment;
- Bob "The Builder" Adams who was called on for every imaginable manual task.

NBTT

Nino Sofra: "I cannot speak too highly of Bernie. He will never offend a single person. He believes in insulting everyone equally"



After a hard day's work!



Team Members Imre Lele, Neil Ramsay, Capt. Bernie Smith, Gregory Ross, Nino Sofra, Bob Adams and Peter Elliott.

International Service With A Difference

Dr Greg Coates - Helping the Solomon Islanders

In 1992 Dr Greg Coates approached our Club with a request for financial assistance to transport much needed medical supplies to the Solomon Islands. Greg had learnt of the need when, as a medical student on holidays in 1987, he was travelling through the Solomon Islands when a boil on his right elbow burst and became infected. His approach to a number of village clinics identified that they had no anti-biotics with which to treat the infection and so had to go to Honiara. Greg realised the plight of the villagers and when he qualified in 1989 he was determined to try and rectify the situation.

With Nino Sofra as our contact, we assisted with the freight costs of sending medication and equipment to the clinics on the Island of Rendova. We were also able to put Greg in contact with Mike Reiner, a fellow Rotarian, who was able to supply him with some critical equipment including some dental equipment. We supplied a microscope, which was needed for the early identification of malaria, and Nino also helped Greg locate medical supplies through some of the drug companies. Further support was the funding we supplied for an "Ambulance Canoe" which allowed Greg to bring patients from out-lying islands.

Three treadle sewing machines, one new and two second-hand, were also donated for use by the Islanders to establish a cottage industry.

Over the years our Club and our Rotaractors have helped locate and supply tens of thousands of dollars worth of medical supplies and equipment, and building supplies, for the island clinics. In the process we have also located tens of thousands of dollars worth of equipment and supplies which has gone to 'Rotary Donations in Kind'.

Sadly, in 1998 the project was terminated when factional forces and greed amongst a small portion of the Island communities derailed an ambitious attempt to build a permanent doctor's clinic and Community Health Centre on the Island of Rendova. However, in the intervening years much good was achieved for the Island communities by Dr Greg Coates with our help.

In 1996 Greg introduced us to Sister Noelle Magree, a Dominican nun with many years experience living in the Solomons. Since then we have been helping her to buy and collect medicines and medical supplies. Again the Club has helped with financial assistance and by collecting stamps to raise money to cover freight costs. This is an ongoing program and we are making a difference to our neighbours' lives in our own small way.

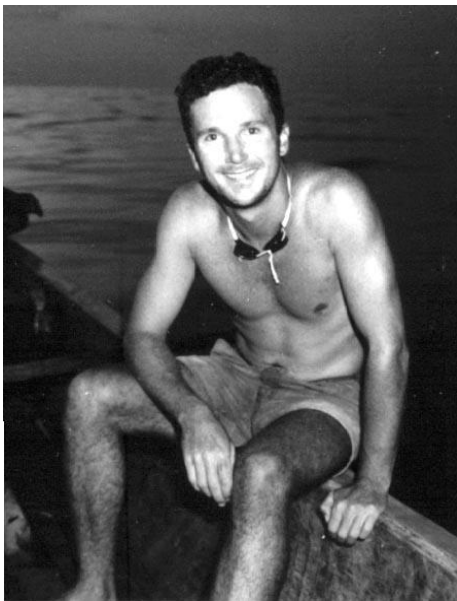
A special memory from Glen Walmsley

Max Hunter in speaking on his experiences of a FAIM project on the Solomon Islands was asked the question "what is the Missionary position in the Solomons?"

His unflappable response was that they were still on top!!



Greg Coates in the clinic, island hopping in the “Ambulance Canoe” we supplied, and the Clinic Operating Hours!!



Greg Coates



Oleg and His Tractor

In January 1992 the Moscow correspondent of the '*Sydney Morning Herald*', Robert Haupt, wrote a most poignant article relating the experience of a Russian farmer, Oleg Stekolnikov. This article was published in '*The Good Weekend Magazine*', in '*The Age*', and '*The Sydney Morning Herald*'. Oleg, with a quarter of a hectare of land, five cows and a decrepit tractor, was attempting to be productive in the face of collective and bureaucratic indifference. The tractor was 25 years old, held together with wire and it originally cost 1000 roubles, or \$13.00 Australian.

Oleg was a new, rare breed in Russia, in that he was attempting to rebuild the farming sector after seven decades of mismanagement. Despite the obstacles placed in his way by the people running the local collective farm, Oleg was fighting for the economic future of the former Soviet Republics.

The article suggested that if people like Oleg don't prevail, we can forget Perestroika, forget privatisation, forget Russia, and prepare for something unpredictable and probably nasty.

John Robson suggested to then President Tony McLean that the Club support the possibility of providing Oleg with a new tractor as a gesture of international goodwill.



Oleg Stekolnikov receives his new tractor and documents from Ian Parmeter, Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in Moscow in 1993.

With the assistance of Robert Haupt, who was still working in Moscow, arrangements were made to provide A\$4,500.00 to purchase a new Byelarus tractor from a factory not far from Moscow. With encouragement from DG Gordon McKern, the Rotary Clubs of Albert Park and Footscray provided fifty percent of the required funds, with North Balwyn providing the other fifty percent.

Despite our efforts to involve the Rotary Club of Moscow and its District Governor, it became clear that if the project was to succeed we would have to ignore the bureaucracy and work directly through Robert Haupt. Due to the lack of confidence in the Russian banking system, the funds were transferred directly into the bank account of *'The Sydney Morning Herald'* in Helsinki, and Robert personally collected them to pay for the tractor at the factory door.

On 3 February 1993 Ian Parmeter, the Counsellor at the Australian Embassy, Moscow, formally handed the tractor over to Oleg. On 6 February, Ian Parmeter wrote to the Club and made the following comment:

"Your gift will undoubtedly encourage other individualists in Russia to follow Mr. Stekolnikov's example and may prove to have played no small role in the eventual economic rehabilitation of this country."

Past R.I. President Royce Abbey wrote to the Club stating:

"This is an excellent example of what world community service is all about, recognising a need, marshalling resources and providing a practical answer to the problem. In addition, through this generous response developed a great deal of goodwill internationally for Rotary and Australia."

In March, 1993 the Club received a letter from the Rotary Foundation advising that despite being unable to assist with finance for the project, details of the project had been sent to Rotary International's Public Relations Department and it may appear in a Rotary International publication. The letter concluded with the following words *"Keep your eyes open and congratulations on a very successful world community service project"*.

In Australia the project promoted the image of Rotary as follows:

- Page one article with pictures in both *'The Age'* and *'The Sydney Morning Herald'*.

In Melbourne the article headline was used on the billboard displayed outside newsagents to sell *'The Age'*.

- The local Leader Newspaper featured an article on the project.
- The gift presentation was included in news bulletins on radio.
- The February 1993 our District Newsletter featured an article about the project with a photograph.
- Both *'The Age'* and *'The Good Weekend Magazine'* subsequently featured follow-up articles on the success of the project.

An interesting sidelight on the project is that unknown to John Robson, the Minister at the local Anglican Church in Templestowe also read the original article and, as a result, prepared a sermon on the subject, followed by a prayer that someone would assist the farmer to achieve his objectives.

Robert Haupt died not long after the completion of the project so John Robson did not get the opportunity to meet him. However, in January 1999, John and his son, Ian, travelled to Moscow and with the assistance of the Australian Embassy a very emotional meeting took place with Oleg and his family at the Stekolnikov residence.

Both families continue to correspond and it is hoped that one day Oleg will visit Australia to personally thank his friends in the Rotary Club of North Balwyn.



*PP John Robson
is greeted by
Oleg Stekolnikov
when John visited
Moscow in
January 1999.*

NBTT

Jim Studebaker; "Now I do make mistakes and I do forget things. I admit that.

So, if anyone here knows that I will forget something, please tell me now – before I forget it.

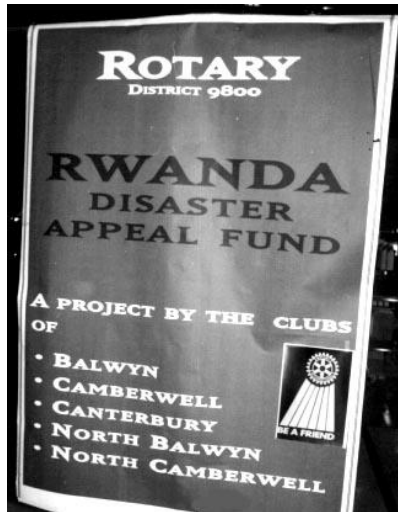
Anyway, we have here tonight, a very special visiting Rotarian named Jorgen Rasmussen from Lenzberg in Queensland...No? .What's that, Jorgen? Not Queensland?...

Oh!. Correction: Switzerland".

The Quick Response Club

Rwanda Disaster Appeal

In June 1995 the catastrophes of tribal warfare struck the emerging nation of Rwanda. The situation was desperate and President Peter Cleary took the initiative. He contacted District Governor David Rosback and with his approval contacted the Presidents of the Rotary Clubs of Balwyn, Camberwell, Canterbury and North Camberwell for an immediate response to assist in a disaster appeal. Paul Fitz acted as coordinator for the District.



At very short notice, and through the generosity of the management at Westfield Shopping Town at Doncaster, a collection point was established within the centre providing the general public with the opportunity to contribute donations to assist the plight of refugees displaced by the warring factions. Members of each of the clubs helped by manning the collection centre for a week and the St George Bank donated counting and banking services. The sum of \$23,000 was raised by direct public contribution and importantly Westfield Shopping Centres offered permission to other clubs or groups of clubs to establish similar collection facilities in each of their centres throughout Australia.

PNG Tidal Wave Relief

One major contribution not listed in the District Directory in 1998-99 was that made by Alan Fabry and others. DG Col Gibbons approached Pres. Bruce McIver to ask if North Balwyn would act as the District's focal point for the PNG Tidal Wave Appeal. Allan volunteered and led the way by collecting the D9800 contributions and passing them on to the Brisbane National Centre. A significant sum of money was collected and all records were copied to D9800 Treasurer, our own Ron Phillips. Once again we demonstrated that North Balwyn was committed to support District activities and could respond quickly.

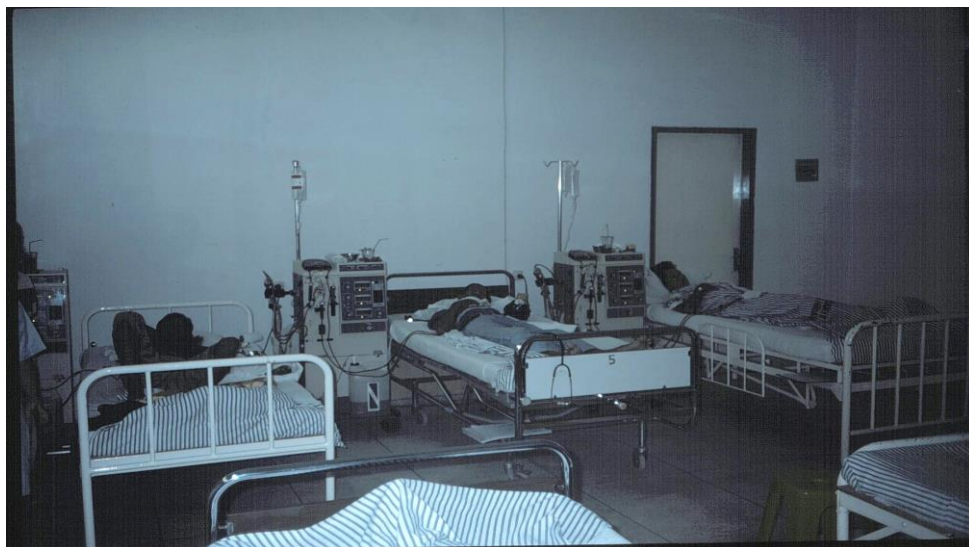
NBTT

Terry Gretton: We've got the Exquisite Egg Show coming up next month so, members, it's time for us to get cracking!

Samarinda

Following a visit to East Kalimantan (formerly known as Borneo) by an "Interplast" medical team from Melbourne, it was suggested that the Rotary Clubs of North Balwyn and Port Phillip Melbourne (now the Rotary Club of Central Melbourne Sunrise) combine in an international project to upgrade the hospital in Samarinda. This was the main hospital in Samarinda, the capital of East Kalimantan, having something like 600 beds, and was in urgent need of upgrading and rehabilitation.

As project volunteers representing the Rotary Clubs involved, PP John Meehan (RC Port Phillip Melbourne) travelled to Samarinda in 1994 with PP John Reddish to investigate the possibilities of a joint international project at the Samarinda Hospital.



A refurbished ward at the hospital in Samarinda

It was quite apparent during their visit that this major hospital, which looked after the majority of the vast number of the people living in that area, was in urgent need of equipment and repair, and in particular, was in urgent need of a Casualty Department.

As a sequel to this, it was not surprising that Carole Ross, wife of PDG Greg, visited Samarinda to assist with setting up a program at the Polytechnic there. Carole had the opportunity to see first hand what had been achieved and was welcomed most warmly when it was realised that she was so closely associated with the Rotary Club of North Balwyn.

As a result, they recommended that our clubs unite in an international project to establish a Casualty Department in Samarinda Hospital, and it was decided that the best way to support this project was by the "Donations In Kind" (D.I.K.) program. Members from both clubs and from Kew and Melbourne, set about finding suitable medical equipment for this Casualty Department. They received considerable assistance from Fred Wright (District DIK Chairman) who provided various items of medical equipment such as anaesthetic machines, etc, already collected in his DIK store. Local hospitals, such as St. Georges, provided such essential items as hospital beds. Immediate PP Rick Morris of the Rotary Club of Melbourne, the then owner of the medical supplies company Denyers, generously provided, free of charge, such vital equipment as new operating tables and operating lights. All of this equipment was packed into containers and duly gratefully received by the Samarinda Hospital enabling the establishment of its first ever Casualty Department. Parallel to this, the Rotary Club of Samarinda became involved with a F.A.I.M. team from D9800 to assist in hospital maintenance.

In 1996, following a visit to Bangladesh to review our Literacy Program in that country, John Reddish was able to visit Samarinda again, and was delighted to see a first class Casualty Department in action as a result of our efforts. He was delighted to see our equipment also being used throughout other areas of the hospital, and, in particular, in their operating theatres. John attended a dinner as guest of honour, attended also by top government and medical officials, given in recognition of what our clubs had done.

It was a great combined international project largely between two Rotary clubs involving considerable "hands-on" participation and little financial commitment by Rotarians.

ROMAC

ROMAC (Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children) is one of the most successful humanitarian programs ever undertaken by Rotary in Australasia. It is officially endorsed by all 23 Rotary Districts in Australia and 6 Rotary Districts in New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands, and is officially recognised by Rotary International.

The program was the brain child of Kangaroo Flat Rotarian Barrie Cooper in 1988. It brings children aged 15 years or younger from neighbouring developing countries in Asia and the South Pacific for a wide-ranging variety of medical procedures which are not available to the children in their home countries because medical resources are scarce and the hospital facilities available make it impossible to receive appropriate treatment. The conditions are either life-threatening or relate to a level of disfigurement, either congenital or acquired, that would result in very low self-esteem and subsequent poor quality of life. Whilst the selection and all arrangements for each child is the responsibility of ROMAC, the surgeons who operate give their time and talent, free of charge and the hospitals provide facilities at a negotiated cost. Two of our members had significant involvement in the development, expansion and recognition of ROMAC in the early days.

In 1994, Paul Fitz, in his capacity as District International Service Chairman, was asked by the then District Governor, David Rosback, to create a new District committee to manage and develop the program and look towards its future financial requirements. So the first District ROMAC Committee was established by Paul 'head-hunting' appropriate District Rotarians as committee members with Barrie Cooper as Chairman.

In 1998 Paul was appointed District Chairman with David Cheney as the District Committee Secretary. Over the next two years ROMAC developed rapidly from a District Committee operation into a Multi-District programme involving the five Victorian Districts, with Paul as Multi-District Chairman and David as Secretary, until it became a national program in 1999 with Paul as the inaugural National Chairman and David as Secretary. In 1999/00 David also served as District Chairman. In 2001 Paul stepped down as President and for the next three years was National Vice President until his retirement from the Board.



An example of ROMAC's work is [Kim](#) (pictured above), [from Vietnam](#). [She had a triple cleft \(most unusual\) of the head/face. One cleft went into her left eye which had no sight. She had no palate so food had to be blown into her mouth through a straw. She underwent a number of cranial-facial operations which also entailed the construction of a new nose. The operations were carried out at the Royal Children's Hospital and the surgeons, doctors and nursing staff provided their expertise and time free-of-charge, which is the norm for most ROMAC cases. When she and her father \(seen in the after photo\) returned home, her mother did not recognize her!](#)

If you were to ask Paul or David they would tell you that those years were fairly hectic, always interesting and they learnt a great deal as they went along. However, they were also very satisfying as they, together with the other Board members, saw ROMAC grow from a yearly intake of one patient to approximately thirty and grow into one of the most professionally-run Rotary programs in Australasia. In 2009/10, the program treated more than thirty children. Due to ROMAC it is now possible to say that some of 'the forgotten children' of the world are being cared for.

In 2004, Paul was made an Honorary Life Member by the National Board of ROMAC

Rotarians Against Malaria (RAM)

In 1995, Past World RI President Sir Clem Renouf challenged all Australian Rotarians to consider undertaking a significant Humanitarian Rotary Foundation project to celebrate the 75th. Anniversary of Rotary in Australia, and as a result all of the Australian districts subsequently voted in favour of undertaking a project to combat the scourge of malaria in the Solomon Islands.

In 1997, thirteen of the twenty three Australian districts agreed to help fund the project and Past District Governor John Reddish was elected National Chairman of this joint “National RAM, Malaria Control Program in the Solomon Islands”. The project was focused on two Provinces of the Solomon Islands where the incidence of Malaria was of major concern, Choiseul Province and Western Province.

Sponsored by these thirteen districts, the project attracted a Rotary Foundation “3-H” Humanitarian Grant to the value of US\$525,000, and two Rotary Foundation “Matching Grants” each to the value of US\$100,000, with a resulting budget in excess of AUD\$1.2 million.

These funds provided the vital malaria control chemicals and insecticides, 350,000 bed nets, funding for environmental projects to clear mosquito breeding sites, training and malaria awareness programmes for the local malaria workers and village leaders, essential transport requirements, fresh water and sanitation projects, and of course malaria research projects.

In addition to the funding, considerable work was also undertaken by Australian Rotary Volunteers in building Health clinics, storage sheds, houses for the malaria workers, water tanks, and repair to existing facilities. The Donations - in - Kind programme also provided such important equipment as computers, monitors, printers, hospital beds, medical equipment, and furniture.

John Reddish, as National Chairman and Project Administrator, along with Errol Richardson from D.9600 as the Project Coordinator, made many visits to the Solomon Islands over the years to monitor and supervise the progress of the project which was completed in September 2005.

The project was an outstanding success, and had a dramatic effect on the incidence of malaria in Choiseul and Western Provinces. In Choiseul the incidence of malaria dropped from the initial 340 cases per 1000 per year to just 67 cases per thousand per year, while in Western Province the incidence dropped from 220 cases per thousand per year to only 47 cases per thousand per year.

As a result of this Rotary malaria control programme only 5 people in every thousand suffered from malaria each month in these two Provinces, an achievement of international significance. In addition the local community became self sufficient and able to maintain its own community-based sustainable malaria control programme, a truly great and worthwhile Rotary Foundation project.

Incubator for Iraq

In 2004, John Robson, as Rotary Foundation director for the Club, searched for a humanitarian project that would demonstrate in some small way, the care and concern that all Australians have for the people of Iraq.

What better way to help than to provide the latest technology for the support of new-born babies who may need an incubator to survive and grow up in a post-conflict Iraq.

With some assistance from the Rotary Clubs in our cluster (Balwyn, Camberwell, Canterbury and Camberwell North) plus generous funding from DG Don Jago, sufficient monies were raised to meet the costs involved.

It was hoped that this gesture would help save lives of “at-risk” babies and, at the same time, show Rotary’s humanitarian support to those most in need.

As a further gesture, the incubator was dedicated to the memory of Australian Broadcasting Corporation cameraman and journalist – Paul Moran. Paul was filming a documentary in Northern Iraq and, as he was about to leave the area, a suicide bomber detonated his vehicle nearby. Paul was the first Australian to lose his life in Iraq.



The incubator donated to Iraq



The Rotary plaque attached to the Iraq incubator

Paul’s colleagues recalled that Paul was a “bright, enthusiastic and dedicated person with a great affinity for the local people”. He is remembered by Northern Iraqis, not just as a foreign journalist, but as someone who cared enough to visit there many times over the previous decade. He cared enough to go back there and risk his life to tell their story to the world.

“Adopt a Community” – Tulagi – Solomon Islands

During the period 2004-2008, our Club completed a 5 year program called “Adopt a Community”, directed towards assisting the development and welfare of people living in Tulagi in the Central Province of the Solomon Islands.

The primary focus was on health and education, but the program also addressed a number of other areas, hopefully leaving the community of Tulagi with a new sense of confidence and security.

This project was registered with RAWCS which, among other things, provided tax deductibility for relevant personal expenses and assisted with insurance issues.

Tulagi “Adopt a Community” has synergies with Rotarians Against Malaria (RAM), Save Water Save Lives (SWSL) and Donations In Kind (DIK).

The Rotary Foundation (TRF) was a critical source of funding through two Matching Grants.

The primary target areas in this community based project were:-

- i) the McMahon High School and
- ii) the Tulagi Community Hospital and Medical Centre.
- iii) The High School had an enrolment of about 500 children from kindergarten to fairly elementary secondary level. The facility could fairly have been described as inadequately funded, under resourced and run down.

The Hospital and Medical Centre serviced the 20,000 people living in Central Province. The Hospital was too small to adequately meet community health service needed and quality medical equipment was in short supply.

Our Club developed a multi-pronged approach to address these identified priorities, including gaining support and funds through The Rotary Foundation and other Rotary Clubs in Australia and elsewhere in the world.

During 2006-2007, several projects at the McMahon High School were completed with funding through a TRF Matching Grant. Total expenditure was \$US30, 320. The Matching Grant was supported with District Designated Funds (DDF), the RC of Balwyn (D9800) and the RC of Goksu (D2420) in Turkey.

The Matching Grant funds were used for:-

- 250 student desks.
- Toilets & Septic Tank.
- Water Tanks (3 X 1000 gallons & guttering).
- At the same time, our club funded the purchase and installation of ceiling fans & lights.



Project participants including club members Sofra, Elliott, Lele, Taylor and Symington.

Our Club was successful in obtaining a 2nd matching grant from TRF to cover the second phase of our program, being work on the Tulagi Hospital.

These matching grant funds were used to:-

- Install 6 water tanks at the hospital and the adjacent community centre.
- Provide a large 38 KVA generator to provide back up for the non-dependable local power supply.
- Supply and erect a 400 metre security fence around the facility.

The erection of this fence was carried out by a team of 10 Rotary volunteers, which include 6 Rotarians from the Port Lincoln Club in South Australia.



Garth Symington and Ian Knight inspect the new water tank

Our efforts have not been confined to projects funded by The Rotary Foundation. A container of Donations in Kind (DIK) was sent to Tulagi and distributed by teams from our own Club. Items sent included hospital beds, chairs, clothing, sporting equipment, books and boxes of Christmas presents for the children, and more.

The Club also arranged for 2 bakery ovens and 6 sewing machines to be provided to the Community Support Program (CSP) to be allocated under a micro-loan system to selected small businesses.

There had been a critical need for a humidicrib at the Hospital and in June 2007 a unit sourced at the Bacchus Marsh Hospital by the RC of Bacchus Marsh (D9800) was shipped to Tulagi as a DIK item. The cost of a similar new humidicrib would have been \$A25, 000.

The churches are very influential in the Solomons and our club members have continued to receive advice and practical input from the Don Bosco Technical Institution based on the main island of Guadalcanal near the capital Honiara.

This project was achieved by a truly international effort, with 5 clubs from the Mississippi D6800 in the USA, plus D2420 from Turkey (via the RC of Goksu) contributing for a second time, along with the RC of Werribee and our own District 9800. This enabled US\$25,600 to be turned into US\$46,650 by the matching grant process through The Rotary Foundation.



Dr. John Reddish in consultation

This was a project that immediately made, and will continue to make a substantial difference to a community that found itself in less fortunate circumstances than we in Australia could willingly allow to exist.

It is a further wonderful example of Rotary at work in an underdeveloped country.



The school desks paid for and supplied by our members

Rice Growing at Tetere, Solomon Islands

Two of our members, Bill Oakley and Bob Bott flew to the Solomon Islands in July 2007 and visited the Don Bosco Rural Farm – a mission training school located 23 kms north west of Honiara on the main island of Guadalcanal.

The mission was established by Father Dominic Kachira in 2004 to assist in the training of the community in wood working skills, general farming skills and servicing of small motors.

The mission also established a hospital, school, radio station and church.

Bill and Bob saw a vast area of abandoned rice fields that had remained idle for 12 years following the destruction of the rice crops and support infrastructure during the period of civil unrest. Prior to the unrest, the Solomons had been a net exporter of rice under the management and guidance of expatriate professionals.

The abandoned rice fields of 80 hectares were simply waiting for someone with the necessary expertise/knowledge to redevelop the land and commence the planting and harvesting of rice again.

Bill and Bob saw the opportunity that if Rotary could educate a school teacher from the mission to learn the required agricultural skills for growing rice, the proven rice fields would flourish again. The Don Bosco Mission, owners the land, where the climate was suitable, and there was an adequate number of students to cultivate, plant and harvest the crop.



Happy “locals” harvesting the vastly increased rice crop

Here was an opportunity to train a teacher who would teach others. Hence, the plan to bring to Australia, a mission teacher to learn the skills of selecting the correct rice variety, developing the planting and harvesting techniques required plus the correct use of fertilizers and pesticides.

After interviewing a number of mission teachers, Joseph Aaron in whom was seen “something special” – an enthusiasm to learn and a teacher wanting to help his students – was selected.

Joseph was subsequently nominated for, and was awarded a Royce and Jean Abbey Ambassadorial Cultural Scholarship. He arrived in Australia in February 2008 to commence a three month training course at the Rice Research Centre in Jerilderie, NSW.

On his return to Tetere, Joseph supervised his students in the clearing, cultivation and planting of ten hectares of rice, and, after using the correct fertilizers and pesticides, saw the yields exceed all expectations.

From the harvest, each student received 100 kgs of rice; and the rice retained by the mission was used for future plantings, and purchase of fertilizers, etc, It was also used to provide one meal per day for each of the students and for patients in the mission hospital – all up, 120 meals per day.

Planting of “paddy rice” was made possible by drilling three new wells and associated pipes, funded by our Club.



Bagging the rice harvest, using the newly acquired machinery.

In 2010, a major project is planned, involving the construction of a rice storage and drying shed. A Rotary Foundation grant was approved in 2009 for this project.

Donations in Kind

The club has been a regular contributor to the “Donations in Kind” programs. Some recent examples are:-

In 2009, with the generous support of ‘Janome Australia’ and Toyota, thirteen (13) new electric sewing machines were received and sent to the Solomon Islands to assist in the club’s ongoing education programme.

Robert Ebihara was instrumental in obtaining the sewing machines, and Brother Michael Lynch of Don Bosco Melbourne then arranged and met all costs for the sewing machines to be shipped to the Solomon Islands.

Another example involved the club’s continuing involvement with our community work in Tulagi, with a mix of club and Rotary International funds, when the club purchased two bread making machines, together with utensils, trays etc. and baking ingredients. This will support two local villagers to commence their own business.

NBTT

George Swanson: “I would like to invite all Paul Harris Fellows to a breakfast next Tuesday morning.

This is Rotary’s way of saying “Thank you for all that you have done”, and it will cost you \$45”.