

PRESIDENT GREG'S UPDATE

18 March 2021

Our meeting started with a very warm welcome to our Guest Speaker, Carolyn Ingvarson and her husband Lawrence.

It was great to welcome to our meeting: Maree with Marcel, Ted Wilkins (up and about again), Phil Francis (back from Anglesea), Don Taylor (before he heads away) and John Koa (with his Hot X Buns).

Who celebrated St. Patrick's Day yesterday?? Back in the 17th century, this started as a religious celebration to commemorate the life of Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland.

Who celebrated not going to the Grand Prix, originally scheduled for today to Sunday? The Grand Prix is now deferred to November.

This week is a very hard act to follow Jane and her terrific team who hosted last Thursday's wonderful International Women's Day celebration – that is sure to be another highlight of the year!! Thank you.

Also last week, the Eastside Cluster Presidents (Balwyn Camberwell, Canterbury and North Balwyn) met for our informal Cluster Meeting. Why do I mention the Cluster Clubs so often? Answer – as the networking simply provides us with comparable Rotary Clubs for ideas, information on Membership, Meetings, Projects, fundraising so it is good to have a benchmark. Yes, our Meeting was preceded by a photo on the R100 seat with Boroondara Councillor Di Gillies – was in Grapevine giving the thumbs up.

JimS and his Cluster Membership colleagues were at last Sunday's market talking to people about Rotary - mixed results for a first up. The better news is that Jim has networked ideas with these colleagues for future Membership initiatives - watch this space.

Last Saturday, DG Philip hosted his Zoom Morning Tea with the DG – always interesting but this time, our Rotarian Rowan created an Opportunity!! Yes, a live cross to Rowan, Estelle, Cris and students enjoying another Garden venue in Kew. Great work Ro - went over very well.

Earlier this week, our 3 storage containers at Chris Cross had a tidy-up by Imre and his team. These containers store all our Catering gear – you name it, it is there (or was before Imre's clean up) thank you.

Also, this week, Kris & Maurie sent the Club a sincere thank card to all friends at RCNB for the flowers, cards, emails, texts of compassion and support following the passing of their daughter Emily.

And last Tuesday, Maurie and Rowan-aka "**2MAURO**"- entertained again at Eva Tilley. Great!!

And today, Imre and some of our newer members went to **DIK for a familiarisation** - Cris Yudi, Rob Hortin, Neil Marshall and Grant King.

Last Monday, our 13 Board Members met to consider a very full agenda including:

- **Meeting attendance at Kew.**
- RCNB's relatively robust **financial position** and opportunities for small Grants.
- The status of the **Drought Relief Program** in St. Arnaud and Numurkah.
- How to best structure a **Homelessness Project** with Servants going forward.

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- Our progress with connecting with potential **Rotaractors**.
- Thoughts on **Fundraising going forward** – BBQ's, Grand Prix, Golf Day.
- **Schools essay competition** timings and very promising outlook.
- Lodging our two Projects for District recognition – **Medical gear to Sri Lanka** and the **10th Anniversary of our Gardening Project**.
- Returning **Member Application** for Ken Maxfield.
- A range of items being managed by **PE Maurie**.
- A shout-out by RC Canterbury for help with **repacking items FORaMEAL**.

The key take out for Members is best summarised as follows:

*The Board had a wide-ranging discussion on the **attendance and structure of our weekly Club meetings**, particularly as attendance has been weak this year - with the notable exception of the meeting to mark International Women's Day. **The Board discussion extended to more general membership issues** including recruiting new members – the records show our numbers have declined in recent years.*

The issue for the Board and for our members is whether the decline in attendance is a long-term trend and whether this is linked to membership numbers and, if so, what needs to be done to fix the situation.

Continuing low attendance at Kew Golf Club (KGC) is not sustainable for the welfare of the Club. It also is an issue for KGC's ability to support us (given their cost structure).

It is worth noting RCNB has a good relationship with KGC. We have been meeting at the Club for 27 years and this has generally been mutually satisfactory, with some give and take by both parties. We have also supported KGC with our Charity Golf Day in recent years and there are members of RCNB who are also active members of the golf club. It would be a pity to lose this relationship.

The Board, in acknowledging the significance of the RCNB membership and attendance issues, will continue to address these in the next few weeks ahead.

In relation to our weekly meetings and taking account of feedback from members, the Board reaffirmed:

- *An expectation that more Members will be comfortable attending meetings as the threat of Covid continues to decrease.*
- *While acknowledging the significance of Zoom meetings during lockdown, a desire to continue with face-to-face meetings.*
- *Arrangements for registering for Club meetings which changed last year to meet Covid requirements will stay in place indefinitely.*
- *Our forward Speaker program has many talented presenters to attract additional attendees and partners/friends/guests will be encouraged and invited to attend more meetings.*
- *We will review the structure of our meetings with a view to ensuring they remain an enjoyable experience for those attending.*
- *We will continue to engage and maintain contact with members as we did during lockdown.*
- *An enhanced Membership drive is being initiated to encourage a wider demographic of active Members.*

It is the view of the Board that these are significant issues for our Club at this time and we would welcome any views or comments you may have. As always, I would appreciate hearing from you.

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And lastly for this week, I again want to acknowledge Member participation in our Community Projects:

1. **Sunday Market** – 14/3 - SueMcD, JohnR, BrianL, KingaP, 21/3 – Don T, JaneP, Eileen, Phil
2. **RCNB Gardening Project** – 12/3 – GeoffH, TonyW, Ian Glenny (Friend of Rotary), GregC
13/3 – film stars.... Rowan, Estelle, Cris 19/3 – GeoffH, GregC, Ian Glenny. 26/3 NeilM, Rob Hortin, JanieP, TonyW, Ian Glenny. 27/3 – PeterE, Estelle, Neil, then it is school holidays to 23 April.
3. **2nd Bite to Camcare Camberwell** – 11/3 – GregC. 18/3 – GeoffH, 25/3 - Rob Head
4. **BBQ's ahead** – 21/3 – MASH BBQ – Box Hill – JohnMcB, Kinga, Sue, JJ, GregC, Jane, Kris, Maurie, JohnM. 10/4 – Bunnings BBQ – roster shortly..... 25/4 – Bunnings BBQ – JohnMcB, Kris, Rob Head, DavidC, Sue, Maurie (*need 4 more from 1pm, please.....*)
5. And there is a call out for all Cluster Clubs to assist with the RC Canterbury **FORaMEAL Project** of re-packing food sachets. This is a very successful Project, one that I would like to see us support by being able to pack some items. The Date is **Wednesday 31st March 6.00 to 8.30pm Amora Hotel – 629 Bridge Rd.** See Grapevine to Register, I have done it.... or chat with me, please.

An Email of gratitude was received yesterday from the Greythorn Traders Association:

Dear North Balwyn Rotary Club members,

Hope you are keeping well. The Greythorn Traders Association which represents the 80 businesses would like the opportunity to extend our thanks and appreciation to the many community groups and volunteers who operate in our neighborhood.

We currently have 200 Greythorn shopping vouchers to the value of \$10 to give away which can be spent at any participating shop and business at Greythorn. The participating businesses will have a sticker on their shop window. We would like to extend the invitation to the North Balwyn Rotary Club members for distribution to your members and any of the groups you assist. The vouchers must be distributed to your members or groups you assist by 31 March. They are valid till 31 May.

Yolanda Torrisi Marketing Coordinator | Greythorn Shopping Centre

This is such a wonderful gesture of thanks that we will pass our allocated 50 x \$10 vouchers to Members attending next Thursday night – remember it is the Greythorn Traders Association seeking our business.

Sergeant Estelle – gave some insights into some Sergeant themes ahead, including more Happy fines whilst we are cashless, individual 'good taste' roasts of Members and then stirred John McBride, in her inimitable style, as to how her Name Tag was located in his pocket.....hmmm. Good fun!!

Jennifer Hortin then hosted Guest Speaker Carolyn Ingvarson on a thought-provoking presentation on "Lighter Footprints" – thanks Jennifer and Carolyn.

Just a reminder on Meetings ahead:

- Thur 25th March – Imre – personal and Club journey
- Thur 1st April – EASTER - No Meeting
- Thur 8th April – David Mann is our Guest Speaker.
- **Partners/Friends/Guests are warmly welcomed at any time.**

As always, grateful for constructive feedback any time. Have a happy, safe, and healthy time Opening Opportunities.

President Greg 😊