

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

***The Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington Inc.***

***ABN 47 754 561 417***

***P.O. Box 64,  
Flemington 3031***

***[rotaryflemington.org.au/](http://rotaryflemington.org.au/)***

***[facebook.com/rotaryflemington](https://facebook.com/rotaryflemington)***

***[instagram.com/rotaryflemingtonkensington/](https://instagram.com/rotaryflemingtonkensington/)***

***Club 24401  
Chartered 24 March 1987  
District 9800***



The mission of Rotary International is to provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through its fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders.

## **2023-2024 Office Bearers**

### **Board**

President	Shraddha Sharma
Secretary	Melina Caccetta
Treasurer	Lesley McCarthy/Edith Chen
President Elect	Lesley McCarthy
Governance	Cody Bettanin

### **Directors**

Club Service	Josie Magri
Community Service	Abdi Hassan
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Matiu Bush
Environment & Sustainability	Lesley McCarthy
International Service	Peter Cribb/Shraddha Sharma
Youth Service	Jeff Weitzel
Foundation Chair	Lesley McCarthy

### **Office Bearers**

Bulletin	Lesley McCarthy
Investment Committee	Cody Bettanin/ Lyn Borghouts/ Lesley McCarthy
Membership	Board
Onto Conference	Board
Opportunity Shop	Melina Caccetta/Shraddha Sharma/Lesley McCarthy
Program	Board
Protection Officer	Beate McManus
Public Relations/Marketing/Web	Lesley McCarthy
Sergeant at Arms	Josie Magri
RIMERN	Lesley McCarthy/Karolina Sevcikova
Donations in Kind Inc	Peter Cribb/Lesley McCarthy

### **District 9800 Representatives**

Lesley McCarthy	ESRAG Oceania executive RIMERN, DiK Board, Facilitator, Leadership & Development Team
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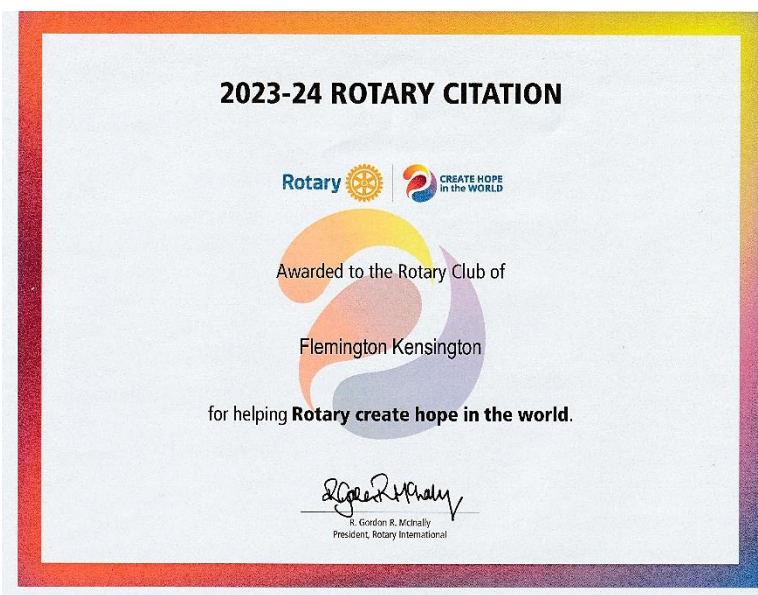


**Rotary International President Gordon McInally  
Rotary Club of South Queensferry, Lothian, Scotland**



**District 9800 Governor Ron Payne  
Rotary Club of Eaglehawk**

**Assistant Governor Tony Laycock  
Rotary Club of Canterbury**



## President's Report 2023-2024:

The Rotary year 2023-2024 was filled with remarkable service, teamwork, and impactful projects that embodied Rotary's mission to foster goodwill, community engagement, and global outreach. As President, I am immensely grateful to all our board members, volunteers, and supporters whose dedication and passion have driven the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington forward, continuing a tradition of service since our club's inception in 1987.



This year, our journey exemplified the power of **initiative, collaboration, and resilience**, while also emphasising the importance of listening to the community and maintaining a clear vision rooted in purpose.

### Key Achievements:

#### 1. Community Engagement & Local Impact:

- **Op Shop Operations:** Despite economic challenges, the Op Shop remained a pillar of our community, contributing over **3,500 volunteer hours** and offering vital support through vocational scholarships and donations to various causes.
- **Mental Health First Aid Training:** With the support of Dr. Francis Acquah, we adapted our training program to meet the community's needs, enhancing participation and engagement over a four-day schedule.
- **Youth & Scholarships:** We proudly continued our sponsorships and scholarships for local schools, including Kensington Community High School and Mount Alexander College. The Op Shop also hosted work experience students and Duke of Edinburgh participants.
- **1000 Stories Initiative:** Over 1,000 books were distributed to Wingate Avenue and The Venny through community donations, promoting literacy.

#### 2. Environmental Sustainability Initiatives:

**National Tree Day:** In partnership with Moonee Valley Council and Keilor East Rotary, our team planted 3,000 trees and shrubs at Rosehill Park Wetlands, reinforcing our commitment to environmental sustainability.

#### 3. International Service & Humanitarian Impact:

**Sri Lanka:** Through collaboration with Donations in Kind and the Rotary Club of Colombo, we sent vital hospital beds and medical supplies, overcoming challenges through community connections, especially with the Sri Lankan diaspora.

- **Puntland, Somalia:** After years of planning, a container of hospital beds, dialysis machines, and educational equipment was sent to Jarriiban Hospital, demonstrating the perseverance of members like Abdi Hassan and Mohammed Abbas.
- **Nepal Education Project:** In partnership with the Rotary Club of Tripureswor and supported by the Balwyn Centenary Grant, we initiated the Back to School project, helping students in Siraha and Udayapur districts access education and sanitation. A successful Global Grant application has been a blessing for this program to find its footing.
- **Maldives:** Books for schools in the Maldives were collected and shipped with the help of the Australian High Commission, showcasing our club's reach and collaborative spirit.

#### 4. Fundraising Successes:

Trivia Night: Organized by Melina Caccetta, this sold-out event was a highlight of the year, bringing members and the community together for a night of fun and fundraising

- BBQs & Community Events: Spearheaded by stalwarts like John Sklenar and Drew Sheehan, our BBQs and events continued to raise funds and strengthen community ties.

#### Learning and Leadership:

Throughout this year, I've learned valuable lessons about the **power of trust, teamwork, and strategic agility**. As we are all always continuously learning, this past year in particular has been actively working on the notion that, 'success in volunteer work lies in building **trust and passion-driven collaboration**'.

#### Looking Ahead;

As I reflect on the past year, I am proud of what we have achieved together. However, I believe we have only **scratched the surface of what is possible**. With leadership from **seasoned president Lesley, dedicated board, passionate members, and committed volunteers**, I am confident that the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington will continue to grow in impact and service.

In 2024-2025, we will build on the foundations laid this year by pursuing:

- **Strengthening partnerships with local organisations** to enhance our community impact.
- **Increasing membership engagement** through diverse events and inclusive activities.
- **Successful execution of the project's initiated through the grant programs**

Thank you all for your dedication, trust, and support. I look forward to the continued success of our club as we live up to the Rotary ideals of "**Service Above Self.**"

This must be the magic that our RI President Stephanie Urchick has dreamt for 2024-2025!

Together, we have accomplished so much, yet I feel we've only scratched the surface of what is possible!



## Secretary's Report - Melina Caccetta

The role of the Club Secretary is to ensure that the administrative requirements of the Board; District and Rotary International are attended to. This involves processing incoming and outgoing correspondence; submission of reports; updating membership databases and the submission of annual returns.

The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 1st November 2023.

The Annual Statement to Consumer Affairs Victoria was submitted in November.

The club has the following registrations:



61094

This allows the club to hold minor gaming activities such as raffles, fundraising events and other events such as bingo, lucky envelopes etc to the amount of \$5000. Raffles over this level still require authorisation.

Consumer Affairs Fundraising

FR-000015337.

This allows the club to conduct formal fundraising events including fundraising for other charities eg End Polio, Australian Rotary Health Lift the Lid.



RC Flemington Kensington Foundation Pty Ltd is a registered Australian Proprietary Company  
ACN 632 136 406



RC Flemington Kensington Foundation is a registered charity.

ABN 75 591 148 794

Deductible Gift Recipient endorsement was approved on 24 October 2019.

**During the 2023-2024 year, we welcomed 2 new members:**



Jo Walker transferred to us from the Rotary Club of Williamstown where she had been a member since 2016 and served as Secretary and Bulletin Editor. Jo is now living with her daughter in Ascot Vale.

Herve Carlos was referred by Melina Caccetta. He is a communications advisor at WorkSafe and also runs his own video/documentary business Life Documentaries. Herve lives in Footscray.



Sadly, we farewelled Yvonne Farquharson who has moved back to NSW, and Sandi Belcher who has moved to Portarlington to live.

We also farewelled Matiu Bush who has resigned due to the challenges of combining his PhD studies with work commitments.

We thank them all for their service and wish them well for their ongoing community service.

## Treasurer's Report : Lesley McCarthy

The Rotary Club of Flemington is no longer registered for GST as our club income is below the threshold. All figures quoted in the report are net of GST.

The financial statements are to be read with the explanations. Several project areas received or spent monies in previous financial years, or will acquit in the following year so a clean breakdown is not always possible.

**NOTE #1:** Due to financial year discrepancies, some grants and payments are received or made in a year other than that which they were applied for or used.

**NOTE #2:** The accounts previously used for RORP and grants have been closed.

**NOTE #3:** The treasurer role was completed by Lesley McCarthy and Edith Chen together. Additional signatories were Shraddha Sharma, Melina Caccetta, Lyn Borghouts and Cody Bettanin.

**NOTE #4:** The Op Shop is managed as a fundraising operation by the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington Foundation Inc, a charity registered with ACNC. All profits are donated to other charities, individuals or organisations whose mission is in line with Rotary's Areas of Focus and appropriate according to the ACNC regulations. The Foundation also has DGR status meaning we are able to issue tax receipts for donations.

**NOTE #5:** The Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington Foundation Inc holds an investment portfolio with Innovayt, established in 2019 with funds raised during 2013-2015 from Metro Rail events. The company associated with this account has 3 directors: Cody Bettanin, Lyn Borghouts and Lesley McCarthy. Shraddha Sharma is a signatory.

The club is in a strong financial position despite the reduction of income from BBQs, and the Op Shops due to COVID.

### ACCOUNT BALANCES AS AT 30 JUNE 2024:

Account name	Account number	Balance	Explanation
Club	151 262 821	5,631.50	
Op Shop	151 262 698	3,803.85	
Projects	168 394 070	89.68	
Investment account	151 446 309	22,047.08	We are holding \$5,000 in trust for BEAP
RCFK Foundation	169 141 215	2,169.97	
Innovayt portfolio		157,285	

See the attached report.



## The Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington Foundation

ABN 75 591 148 794



The Foundation was established in 2019 to manage funds raised through the 2 Op Shops. The charitable status allows the club to manage and distribute funds more effectively and allows income to be GST exempt.

The Foundation also allows us to accept donations which can be tax deductible through our DGR status.

Despite the restrictions to trading through lockdowns necessitated by COVID both shops made good profits which were then directed to a number of charities and deserving people and organisations.

During the 2023-2024 financial year, the Foundation made payments for:

MVCC L2P car	30,000
ARH PhD scholar	12,000
Polyglot theatre	1,000
Farnham street choir	3,200
Live for Lily	2,000
GoFundMe	1,000
Philippines	500
Rotary Foundation	3,000
Donations in Kind	3,500
RIMERN	1,000
RYPEN	891
RYLA	2,000
Scholarships	5,550

### Op Shop report: Melina Caccetta:

This financial year has been disappointing from a trading point of view. While we have still had many customers, sales have been less as is the situation with all traders in Flemington.

We have retained our valued volunteers who have amassed a huge 3,500 volunteer hours during the year. Alex De Bortoli, Deborah Ryan, Frances Stratford, Barbara Ryan, Vinh Ly, Rui Keng, Nahla Khidhir, Emily Qoroya, Gael Moran, Nina Farmer and Diana O'Toole have been regular and reliable supporters. Volunteers were recognised with lunches during National Volunteer Week and at Christmas. They were also presented with Volunteer acknowledgement certificates and a Christmas cake.

We have accepted Work Experience students from Mount Alexander College.

We had JobFind candidates until December 2023. We received \$3000 from them for the July-December prior.

The RagMan paid us \$111 over the year. Rags are collected fortnightly.

There have been several instances of shoplifting and of drug/alcohol affected customers as well as some experiencing mental health issues. I attempt to defuse and calm the situation but have at times felt the need to close. This too is typical according to reports from Flemington Traders.

We have had further issues with the roof and electricity. The landlord arranged for the roof to be repaired. Dennis O'Brien was called into do some minor electrical repairs, and a plumber was needed for some tap issues.

## Members 2023-2024

Mohammed Abbas Omar	March 2023
Cody Bettanin	6 years
Lyn Borghouts	9 years
Allan Bruno {H}	34 years
Melina Caccetta	3 years
Geoff Cawsey {L}	<b>36 years</b>
Edith Chen	10 years
Peter Cribb	17 years
Alexandra De Bortoli	April 2023
Nina Farmer	March 2023
Abdi Hassan	March 2023
Anne Heyes	5 years
Josie Magri	31 years {including Rotaract}
Nicole Marshall	4 years
Lesley McCarthy	28 years
Beate McManus	29 years
Anthony McManus {H}	9 years {including honorary}
Lorry Rowe	6 years
Len Seddon {L}	33 years
Karolina Sevcikova	3 years
Shraddha Sharma	21 years {including Rotaract}
John Sklenar	29 years
Rebecca Smith	1 year
Drew Sheehan	April 2023
Jon Temby {H}	12 years
Jo Walker	transferred from Williamstown
Jeff Weitzel	April 2023
Mount Alexander College –	4 years
Kate Stevanovic, Duncan Hiller and Ching Chan	

## THE FIRST OBJECT OF ROTARY

The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service.

### Club Service

Meetings were held fortnightly alternating between breakfast and dinner on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays. We have continued to have difficulty with meeting venues, but most face to face meetings were held at Mama Bear Café.

**Bulletins** were provided monthly using the ClubRunner element.

### Website

The club website based on ClubRunner contains a vast amount of information on our club events and activities, club bulletins and stories.

ClubRunner synchronises between District 9800 and Rotary International making member updates simple.

### Program – Shradha Sharma/ Lesley McCarthy

The speakers program served to enrich members knowledge and enable further relationships with local community groups. The program included:

Cathy Connop – Farnham Street Learning Neighbourhood  
Katie Hester – Live for Lily  
Catherine Johnson – Australian Rotary Health PhD scholar  
Anton Hockey – RYDA  
Emma Phillips – MVCC L2P  
Theo Byard – Simmonds College  
Malia Silao and Gerard Broadfoot - Abbey Solo Foundation  
District Governor Ron Payne and Deb  
Assistant Governor Tony Laycock

### District Assembly

Lesley, Peter and Jo attended District Assembly.

### District Conference

The 2024 conference was held in Bendigo. We did not have any attendees.

### District Changeover

Lesley attended the District Changeover at Essendon Fields. The club received the Vocational Award for the L2P car.



The **Annual Club Presidents Changeover** was held at the Mercure in North Melbourne.

We were delighted with the attendance of so many members and friends.

It was a joy to have Danny Pearson MP, Cr Katrina Hodgson; ARH PhD scholar Catherine Johnston, Danni von den Borch from The Venny, visiting Rotarians AG Tony Laycock, David Dippie, Laurie Fisher, Kevin Walsh and David Jones from RC Balwyn, Larry & Susan Robb from RC North Melbourne, Peter Boudville from RC Brunswick Tullamarine. We also welcomed the Sri Lanka Consul General, Mr Nihal DeRun, Bob Allardice from RC Nunawading.. Ching Chan and students from MAC.

Paul Harris Sapphires were presented to Shraddha Sharma, Melina Caccetta and Peter Cribb.



The **Vance Hilton Award** was presented to Danni von den Borch from The Venny.

The **Jim Hosie Trophy** was awarded to Alex De Bortoli for her enthusiasm, commitment and support of club events and projects.

A 30-year membership certificate was presented to Beate McManus.



Rotary Avenues of Service Awards were presented to Abdi Hassan, Jeff Weitzel, Jo Walker



Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Bob Allardice, Ching Chan, Rotary Balwyn.



Sri Lanka

Rotary Balwyn for the Centenary Grant supporting Nepal.



Op Shop was well represented:



Cluster



## THE SECOND OBJECT OF ROTARY:

High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society.

**1. Rotary Inner Melbourne Emergency Relief Network** – providing household goods to disadvantaged families and those who have experienced loss through trauma, fire, flood, domestic violence. Members volunteer on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month.

**2. Donations in Kind** – Peter and Lesley volunteer weekly. Lesley serves as our club representative the DiK committee.

**3. Rotary Overseas Relocated Playgrounds** – Peter Cribb, John Sklenar, Shraddha Sharma

**4. International Womens Day** – Shraddha, Nicole and Charlotte, Karolina and Haruka joined the students from MAC.

**5. National Tree Day** – Lesley, Shraddha and Sami, Drew and Haruka and Jo joined with MVCC and Keilor East Rotary to plant 3000 trees and shrubs at Rosehill Park wetlands.



**6. Moonee Valley Festival** – we joined with EAHA to run this sausage sizzle and support the festival. John Sklenar, Peter Cribb, Karolina Sevcikova, Nicole Marshall, Haruka Tanaka, Shraddha Sharma and Lesley McCarthy supported Anwar, Daga, Sophia and Soraya.



**7. Djerring Hub Harmony Day** – Lesley McCarthy organised this event which was well supported. Jeff Weitzel and Shraddha Sharma assisted along with Ching Chan and 10 students from MAC who did a great job.



**8. Unison Housing BBQ** – we assisted with funding for this bbq installed at Derby Street Kensington in the community garden for residents of Unison Housing. Shradha, Jo and Drew attended the opening.



**9. Trivia Night** – Organised by Melina Caccetta with help from Alex D Bortoli, this was a soldout night. Members attending and assisting were Jo Walker, Peter and Bev Cribb, Drew Sheehan, Lesley McCarthy, Ching Chan and 4 students from MAC, Karolina Sevcikova, Dulcie and Geoff Cawsey, Len Seddon.



**9. 1,000 Stories** – over the year, almost 1000 books were donated to Wingate Avenue and The Venny. These books were sourced from the Op Shop, DiK and donations.

**10. It's in the Bag** – members contributed handbags, toiletries and sanitary items for this years Share the Dignity/It's in the Bag drive through Danny Pearson's office. 25 handbags filled with goods were donated by our members.



**11. Mental Health First Aid** – supported by a grant from the District Foundation, this event was held at Djerring Hub over 4 days. Members who assisted were Shradha Sharma, Alex DeBortoli, Lesley McCarthy, Abdi Hassan, Mohammed Abbas Omar and Drew Sheehan.



## **THE THIRD OBJECT OF ROTARY**

The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life.

### **Community Service:**

The Op Shop continues to be the face of Rotary in the community and provides a social and connection opportunity for many people. Volunteers are dedicated and continue to be a great support. Melina continues to strengthen our relationship with community groups.

A partnership with JobFind has provided Job seekers to gain retail experience with us.

The shop has approval from Services Australia to accept Centrelink volunteers.

Our Authority Number is: **690917**

The Food Pantry continues to be necessary.

### **Environment:**

We continue to partner with Moonee Valley Council on tree plantings. On National Tree Day, the team worked at Rosehill Park Wetlands.

### **International Service:**

**1. RORP** - whilst our members have taken a step back, Peter Cribb continues his role and is supported by John Sklenar and others as time permits. The program managed by Bob Allardice at Rotary Nunawading has continued. At this year's changeover, a Certificate of appreciation was awarded to Bob Allardice.

**2. Philippines** – the club continues to support Lorry Rowe in her work. This year, we contributed \$1000 for the street kids food program and towards dental programs through Rotary Calabatuan.

**3. Sri Lanka** – 2 containers filled with hospital beds and assorted medical equipment have been shipped through RARE in South Australia and Donations in Kind. The container from RARE was funded by the Australian Sri Lankan Association of SA.

**4. Maldives** – through Peter Cribb's recent visit to Sri Lanka this request was accepted. Peter identified books and collected them with assistance from John Sklenar, Abdi Hassan, Jo Walker and Shradha Sharma. Books were then sorted, culled and repacked at DiK by Peter and Bec, Jo and Lesley before being taken to the shipper at Tullamarine. This project was funded by the Australian High Commission in the Maldives at no cost to us.

**5. Puntland, Somalia** – this project to support the Jarriban University and hospital has been 2 years in the planning and organising. Managed by Abdi Hassan and with funding support from the Somali community, this container contained hospital beds and equipment, university desks and chairs and medical supplies. It shipped in August.

**6. Nepal** – supporting education in rural Nepal. Shradha's passion project more than a year in the planning and organising. A Global Grant was submitted and an application to the Rotary Club of Balwyn for their Centenary Grant was also successful. This project is in partnership with the Rotary Club of Tripureswor.

### **YOUTH**

The club's focus on youth programs continued strongly. Scholarships were presented at Ascot Vale



West PS, St Brendans PS and Debney Meadows PS.

MAC: The Del King Scholarship was awarded to Sarah Alman. Sarah also volunteers in the Op Shop. The Ted Frank vocational award was presented to Taylor Setina.

KCHS: The Eugene O. Scholarships at Kensington Community HS were awarded to Eden Lawrence and Clay Crawford.

The Op Shop accepts work experience and Duke of Edinburgh students for placements.

## THE FOURTH OBJECT OF ROTARY

The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

In July we welcomed Haruka Tanaka, a Global Grant scholar from Nigata Japan. Haruka is studying a Masters Degree in Developmental Studies at the University of Melbourne.

She has attended meetings and participated in a number of club events. She has planted trees, helped at BBQs and worked at the Op Shop.



Her club host Lesley McCarthy has taken her to meetings at the Rotary Club of Melbourne and Central Melbourne, to the Paul Harris Foundation breakfast and the Paul Harris Society lunch.

Haruka attended RYLA in December.

Alex De Bortoli has taken her to the Royal Melbourne Show and to Ice Hockey.

Shraddha Sharma has taken her ice skating and to the theatre.

Drew Sheehan has welcomed her to his home for Christmas dinner and has also assisted her with admin, tax and settling in – he speaks Japanese.



# ROTARY IN THE NEWS

We continued to have good cover in Flem Ken News published quarterly and in the Inner North West City News published monthly. This is a good opportunity to share stories and have some coverage of our Op Shop, activities and areas of focus. We also submit stories to the District Networker and to Rotary Down Under magazine.

## Thanks for the trees!

Sheila Byard

There is a long history of Kensington and Flemington community members being involved in tree planting, starting at the time of Federation 1901 with pupils from the local schools planting elm trees along Bellair Street. Arbor Day, celebrated in Victorian schools from the late 1880s, gradually gave way to National Tree Day.

It was good to hear that Moonsee Valley Council held a 2023 National Tree Day event at the Rosehill Park Wetlands on 30 July.

Flemington Rotary Club joined with members from Rotary Keilor East, the Friends of Steele Creek, Guides, Scouts and other locals. Holes were pre dug and seedlings placed ready for planting by MVCC workers.

There were a number of displays and other activities for children. Uncle Dave gave a wonderful Welcome to Country with a traditional smoke ceremony using local leaves. Three thousand seedlings and 3 mature trees were planted. The Flemington Rotary team included Drew, Haruka, Jo, Shradha & Samira, Lesley, Anne, Janet and Alex. Photos are available on Flemington Rotary's Facebook page.

During the International Year of the Tree (1982), at the time when the City of Melbourne made available suitable trees and shrubs from its Royal Park nursery, and TV Garden Guru Kevin Heinze made regular visits to Kensington Primary School, students were invited to take part in planting along the embankment at the edge of the Moonsee Ponds Creek. Forty years later these trees contribute greatly to the amenity of a locality where apartments are now more typical than single dwellings with front and back yards.

In other parts of Kensington you can see that the Parks and City Greening Division of the City of Melbourne has also been busy

during the current planting season. Nearly fifty new trees of mixed species are now in place on the section of J.J.Holland Park along Kensington Road opposite Mercantile Parade. These are the replacement trees for ones removed during the rebuild of the Kensington Pool and Community Centre. And on the west side of Smithfield Road near Epsom Road, on the grass verge beside Quest on Flemington, there are dozens of new trees each with a water retaining guard.

City of Melbourne has some great information about trees in both the public and private domain available online. Did you know you can find a given tree and send it a message? If you visit the Melbourne Urban Forest Visual site you can identify each tree in the streets and parkland of our suburb. <http://melbourneurbanforestvisual.com.au/>

Much information is available about the City of Melbourne's Urban Forest approach to the planting care and maintenance of trees. Within the boundaries of the municipality there are ten Urban Forest Precinct Plans, which are being reviewed in turn. This year community members in Carlton, CBD, East Melbourne and South Yarra had the opportunity to discuss trees, and to assist in drafting revised plans.

Next year in 2024 there will be consultation over plans for Kensington, North and West Melbourne and Docklands. Giuliana Leslie | Project Officer - Urban Forest and Ecology Parks and City Greening suggests that those who are interested in being involved in the community workshop for Kensington should 'follow' the Participate Melbourne page. Then you will be able to receive updates when they are posted: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/urban-forest>.

We hope to run a twilight walk and talk about the trees of 2031 later this year. Please contact the Kensington Neighbourhood House to register your interest.

Email: [info@kenhouse.org.au](mailto:info@kenhouse.org.au)

## Humans of Flem Ken: Melina Caccetta

Keir Paterson

I started the Kensington Craft Market 10 years ago, to highlight the incredible makers and creators we have in the Kensington and Flemington area.

I wanted to leave the corporate world and it seemed like there was a need for a craft market. That was 10 years ago (if you take out COVID), and it has been wonderfully accepted by the whole community.

A few years ago I started volunteering at the Rotary Op Shop on Racecourse Road, then I started working here, then they made me the manager.

I love working at the Rotary Op Shop, it's the best job I've ever had: I meet all different types of people in different situations and predicaments.

I get to hear people's stories every day, and I get to pay it forward. It's wonderful.

I've lived in Kensington my whole life - my Dad bought our house in 1952.

It used to be, 'Oh, you live in Kensington, you poor thing.' People looked down on you. Now it's, 'Oh you live in Kensington, you must be rich!'

But the people haven't changed. It's still very diverse, very welcoming.

I love walking past the Women's Peace Garden and seeing people having a little picnic or a glass of champagne. I love seeing the kids playing at Bayswater Park, or taking my dog to the river for a run. You can walk everywhere, so there's always a lot of community life.

One change I've noticed growing up is that



people don't support the local strip shops the way they used to.

community feel.

So if there was one message I would want people in Flemington and Kensington to hear it's support local businesses! Buy a coffee, get a sandwich, pick out a gift!

When I set up the Kensington Traders Association over 20 years ago it was all about supporting local businesses.

It's 'use it or lose it'. Some big builders will come along and make all the buildings into apartments if we don't support our local traders. And we'll lose that beautiful

I know it can be easier to go to the supermarket or shopping centre, but we have something special here, so let's preserve it.

## Rotary Flemington Kensington have extended their community partnership with JobFind, assisting the expansion of its Op Shop Pantry.

Melina Caccetta, Manager of the Op Shop operated by Flemington Kensington Rotary, has developed a strong relationship with the JobFind Flemington centre.

JobFind have been supporting the Op Shop with volunteer workers, providing on-the-job experience in retail and community work for the last 12 months.

This year, the shop has hosted 10 workers for periods from 4 to 10 weeks. Melina and her regular and experienced volunteers are training the workers in all aspects of the shop, from sorting and pricing donations to stock rotation, creating displays, presentation and sales.

The volunteer workers agreed that the existing food pantry was an excellent and positive support mechanism for disadvantaged community members, especially in difficult economic times following COVID.

They identified toiletries and sanitary products as another area of need and encouraged Melina to seek further assistance from JobFind.

Theresa Tran, Manager of JobFind Flemington agreed, took up the challenge and put a call out to their reps. Recently, they visited the shop with 6 cartons of donated



items to the amazement of Mel, Barbara, Deb and Louise!

The Pantry now provides a range of groceries, cleaning products and personal hygiene items, including some baby products.

People in need are encouraged to visit and also access the fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs donated by local residents. Melina monitors goods and requests that people take only what they need to ensure there is plenty for all.

We at Flemington Kensington Rotary are so grateful to JobFind - not just for this amazing donation, but the quality jobseekers they send us.

The toiletries donation builds on our established relationship and strengthens the pantry offerings at the shop, providing even greater help for local community members.

Donations to the opp shop food pantry are welcome. Jobfind encourage local businesses to consider supporting work placements. Contact Joanne on [joanne.farrugia@jobfind.com.au](mailto:joanne.farrugia@jobfind.com.au)

### ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY?

We are seeking community minded people to work in the Op Shop.

Are you:

- Over 16 years old
- Available to work Tuesday to Saturday between 11am-4pm
- Able to commit to at least one shift each month
- Honest, reliable with initiative
- Looking for a friendly and rewarding situation

444 Racecourse Road Flemington  
next to the childcare centre

Contact Melina  
0402 752 257

Rotary  
Flemington Kensington

IMAGINE  
ROTARY



## Wheels on the Ground at Youth Fest

Lesley McCarthy

Moonee Valley Council's Youth Fest on 22 September was the perfect opportunity for the launch of a new car donated to the L2P Program by Flemington Kensington Rotary.

In brilliant sunshine, Rotary District Governor Ron Payne joined President Shradha Sharma, members of Flemington Kensington Rotary and Moonee Valley council representatives to celebrate the new car.

Ron and Shradha expressed their delight at this opportunity for Rotary to support young people who were unable to obtain the required supervised driving hours.

Education and supporting young people are key pillars of the work being done by Rotary in the community and Flemington Kensington Rotary contributes thousands of dollars annually through scholarships, sponsorships and material support in the Flemington, Kensington and Ascot Vale communities.

Mayor Pierce Tyson was accompanied by Cr Rose Iser, L2P Coordinator Emma Phillips and performed the formal ribbon cutting alongside DG Ron and President Shradha.

The car, a Kia Rio, proudly wears the Rotary Flemington Kensington branding along with L2P and Moonee Valley Council. It will be based at the Ascot Vale Leisure Centre and joins the existing vehicle which is housed at Moonee Ponds Police Station.

Flemington Kensington Rotary began their involvement with learner/migrant drivers in 2013 when they initiated the RoadStar program in conjunction with VicRoads and the Victorian Government. This project supported people to obtain the required hours of supervised driving through volunteer mentors. In 2015, the program became DriveLink managed by council.

The funds for this donation were raised during 2013 when the club participated in a large number of sausage sizzles for the Metro Rail Link upgrade where a breakfast BBQ, fruit and drinks were provided for commuters being bussed from the Werribee line to Flemington racecourse. Members ran these BBQs at Flemington racecourse and Sunshine railway stations throughout the year.

*Mentor drivers are needed and Emma Phillips is keen to source volunteers from the Flemington and Ascot Vale areas. A commitment of just 2 hours weekly will assist a young person obtain their licence and help with their education and employment opportunities. Contact Emma, MVCC Community Development Programs Officer at: emhillins@mvc.vic.gov.au*

## Rotary Scholar update

Haruka Tanaka

Hello, I am Haruka Tanaka from Niigata in western Japan. You may have seen my hometown on the news recently as we were impacted by the recent earthquake at Ishikawa, which is close. Fortunately my family are all OK.

I arrived in Melbourne on Monday 12 July 2023 after a long trip from Tokyo with a 6-hour stopover in Singapore. I was greeted by Mrs Lesley McCarthy from the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington, who are my host club in Melbourne. She took me to lunch, gave me a welcome pack and arranged for me to stay with a Rotarian family that night.

The Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington have been so supportive of me. They made me very welcome, helped me with food, transport and included me in so many events.

Since arriving, I have attended club meetings and 3 official Rotary events where I met some of the senior district leaders. I also attended the week-long Rotary youth



leadership program and met other visiting scholars.

Lesley took me to a tree planting day with council where I met an indigenous elder and took part in the smoking ceremony. I also ate my first Rotary sausage! This was an amazing day as I had not planted trees before or seen an indigenous ceremony.

I have helped at a Rotary BBQ and have visited the Djerring Community Hub and Mount Alexander College.

Alex took me to the Royal Show where I

saw the animals and had some fun rides. She also took me to ice hockey, which she plays. Mel has been so kind at the Op Shop with clothes and food. Edith has taken me out to lunch. Shradha took me ice skating. Drew invited me to a Christmas party. Jo has helped me, and Lesley has taken me to several events, and has introduced me to teachers at the local secondary school who have invited me into their classes.

I was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Niigata and was fortunate to receive a scholarship from Rotary International to cover my tuition and living expenses.

I am studying for a master's degree in developmental studies at the University of Melbourne, having gained a Bachelor of Education from Niigata University. I chose developmental studies as I am keen to work with children in developing countries, especially to help girls continue their education.

I did find the course very difficult to begin with. My English is good, but everyone speaks so fast and with the new vocabulary of this study, I had to work extra hard to understand.

I also found it difficult as the course is very different to my previous university studies. I have however achieved good grades this semester and am looking forward to this year.

I have now settled into new accommodation, have volunteered at a homework club and have made some friends in my course. I am very much looking forward to starting back at university and finding a part time job.

Haruka is a Rotary Global Scholar, hosted by Flemington Kensington Rotary.



Participants with their certificates of attainment.

## Rotary runs Mental Health First Aid program

Lesley McCarthy

Rotary Flemington Kensington recently organised a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program with a difference.

Flemington Kensington Rotarians were well aware of challenges to mental health and wellbeing faced by residents of local social housing estates, having worked with community members for many years. Among the towers, there are many residents with refugee backgrounds who may have experienced trauma in their lives.

We had previously run a mental health forum in 2022 at a time when community distress was high. A takeaway from this forum was the need to support families dealing with mental health challenges among their children and teenagers. So members began exploring options and ways to address this need.

Having organised Mental Health First Aid programs in the past, President Shradha Sharma was keen to run this program again. Moonee Valley Council offered their facility at the Djerring Hub, with a large and airy classroom containing AV facilities. Moonee

Valley staff at the Djerring Hub also took up the challenge of reaching out to the community with their talented multilingual staff to promote the program.

A culturally sensitive and linguistically capable presenter was a priority. Dr Francis Aquah OAM, PP Rotary Greensborough was selected.

As the program was designed for mothers, it was scheduled to run over four days during school hours. Childcare was also offered.

Early in March, the program kicked off with 21 participants anxiously collecting their workbooks. Cultural groups represented included Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, as well as Australia, Italy, China, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Francis in his colourful outfit soon had them at ease and gently eased into what was at times quite challenging material. Throughout the course, there were frequent breaks, timeouts when the topics became confronting and special signals when someone needed a break. A Rotarian was on duty throughout the

sessions to offer support, solace and tissues.

There are some clear barriers to obtaining mental health support that arose during discussions:

1. In some of the languages used by participants, there is little vocabulary for anxiety, depression, bullying, suicide, self-harm and other mental health issues such as schizophrenia. Thus children/teenagers/parents might struggle to clearly articulate or discuss what is happening in their lives.
2. With English as an additional language, communicating concerns and asking for help can be very difficult. Similarly, navigating the health system with limited English language skills or a lack of digital literacy can be a barrier.
3. Lack of trust was a concern.
4. There can be stigma around raising mental health issues.
5. Parents can struggle to know when and how to intervene with their loved ones.

Clarity around some of these points from Francis was vital. Things to consider include how long symptoms have been noticed, the severity and escalation of symptoms and the impact on a person's life.

ALGEE (the mental health first aid action plan) became everyone's best friend as we discussed and considered presentations:

- Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis
- Listen and communicate non-judgmentally
- Give support and information
- Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help
- Encourage other supports

After the fourth session, participants were presented with Certificates of Attendance, with formal accreditation provided following submission of feedback and a small assessment.

On hand to congratulate participants were

members President Shradha Sharma, Abdi Hassan and Mohammed Omar Abbas from Puntland, Somalia, as well as Past President Lesley McCarthy.

The biggest impact from this program is the confidence now evident among participants to support and assist young people and adults in their community.

Through the program, Rotary have expanded our reach with the community, strengthened our relationship with council, and developed contacts with local social support agencies.

Feedback was very positive with many asking for further training focusing on other MHFA programs.

One participant said, "I learned a lot and I am applying the ALGEE to my community and colleagues, and neighbours."

Another said, "The course was challenging especially the videos containing distressed people. But now I understand how to assess the situation, listen and offer support. Thank you for the opportunity!"

Visit <https://www.rotaryflemington.org.au/> for more info about Rotary Flemington Kensington's activities.



Dr Francis Aquah and his colourful clothing