

The Alice Springs Rotary Henley On Todd Inc

ABN: 35 372 412 430

Press Release

Today marks the launch of the Henley on Todd Regatta fundraising campaign where we aim to raise \$100,000 for The Fred Hollows Foundation to contribute to the fight to end trachoma by 2020.

The Regatta was started in 1962 when Rotary Club members met for a picnic at 16 Mile Creek outside of Alice Springs, where over a few beers they discussed ways to raise money for charity.

Reg came up with the idea of holding a waterless 'Regatta' on the dry bed of the Todd River. "Okay, what about the boats - do we tow them or push them?" asked one Rotary member, "Neither," he said, "We cut the bottoms out and carry them!" So began the 54 year history of the Rotary Henley on Todd Regatta - the only dry river bed boat race in the world!

Reg Smith, the inventor of this event is no longer with us, but his legacy lingers on through this event.

The Henley on Todd is one of the longest running fundraising events in Australia and is certainly the Northern Territory's most iconic event – synonymous with irreverence and that truly laconic outback humour.

It has been so successful in creating that image, many people have forgotten what the Henley on Todd is – THE major fundraising event for the three Rotary Clubs of Alice Springs.

"Each year 3-5,000 people gather on the banks of the dry riverbed of the Todd River to witness one of the world's strangest events – a dry river bed boat race – a parody of the Royal Henley on Thames Regatta. It had to be cancelled one year because the Todd River had the audacity to have water in it!" said Mr Peter Nankivell, Commodore of the 2015 Henley on Todd Regatta from the Rotary Club of Stuart.

"The event has run for so long and is so well known globally, we wanted to use it as a vehicle to raise additional funds and make an even bigger difference in the region."

The three Rotary Clubs of Alice Springs searched for a cause they could take on that would significantly alter people's lives in a positive way, and for which they could raise the profile of, as much as Rotary has raised the profile of ending Polio worldwide.

"The issue of trachoma, with much of the diseases' impact being felt in Central Australia, seemed to be one area where we could make a significant impact. So the journey began to find a sponsor and a partner who were equally passionate about the issue. We found that in ASSA ABLOY and The Fred Hollows Foundation and we are delighted to have them on board," said Commodore Nankivell.

Their partnership brings a whole new meaning and purpose to the Henley on Todd and Rotary is truly grateful for their participation.

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“ASSA ABLOY are excited to once again be the major sponsor of this iconic Australian event, more importantly we are extremely proud to be able to partner with Rotary and the Fred Hollows Foundation, to raise much needed funds and end Trachoma in Australia”, Said Nick Penny - Director of Marketing ASSA ABLOY Australia.

“The Foundation is incredibly pleased to have been chosen as the recipient of funds from the Henley on Todd Regatta. Australia is still the only developed country to have trachoma, which is sadly found in too many remote Aboriginal communities,” said Gabi Hollows, Founding Director of The Fred Hollows Foundation.

“Fred worked tirelessly to tackle the crippling health conditions and inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and this work is being continued by The Foundation. But we cannot do this work without the generosity of others, like that shown by Rotary and the Henley on Todd 2015 event. We are very grateful for the support.”

Rotary also want to acknowledge the incredible work that Dr Tim Henderson and his team do with the hundreds of surgical interventions they perform a year, the work of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in the diagnosis, treatment and health education on trachoma throughout Central Australia. The Northern Territory Government’s Centre for Disease Control is also providing the antibiotic treatments that kill this disease.

Over the coming months leading up to the event on Saturday August 15 2015, we will be providing individuals and organisations with a number of different ways that they can participate in the elimination of trachoma right here in Australia by 2020.

We invite all Australians to rise up and help end a disease that primarily affects our first nation’s people.

By going to <http://www.gofundme.com/endtrachoma> you can not only join the fun of the Regatta, but help eliminate trachoma in Australia forever.

We invite you to be part of “We Did This”!

For further information, please contact marketing director, Bill Palmer on 0427 392 059.



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