

Chris Rehn

Chief Executive, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

There wouldn't be too many Rotarians here in District 9685 who have not heard of the Royal Institute of Deaf and Blind Children. Rotary has been a proud advocate and supporter of the institute over many years and today, we recognize and honour the Institute's Chief Executive, Chris Rehn.

Previously the General Manager of Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre, Chris joined the Royal Institute in 2010 and is bringing his considerable expertise to the 155 year old institution, empowering and equipping it to meet the challenges of the future.

Like any organisation these days, The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children is faced with immense and complex challenges – to expand service provision, improve efficiency and work under ever increasing financial pressures. Chris has been instrumental in meeting and exceeding these challenges through a combination of strategic partnerships, networking, marketing and education. His ambitious change agenda has seen RIDBC expand to 17 sites and many more avenues of service delivery via numerous remote access channels.

Chris is a passionate advocate for technology's role and has established systems that deliver specialist education, therapy and Cochlear implant support services directly to people's homes and local facilities. These include individual and group classes, parent and educator networking programs, support to develop enhanced communication options, Braille tuition, vision loss support, transition to school and school support, assessment, therapy and diagnostic programs.

Chris helped formalise the natural synergy between the Royal Institute and his previous employer, Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre, creating Australia's largest and most comprehensive Cochlear implant program.

His ongoing promotion and development of the RIDBC Renwick Centre, a powerhouse of research, education and professional development through the University of Newcastle has positioned the Royal Institute's influence to impact globally, with graduates coming from places as far afield as Botswana, Brunei, China, Canada, Kenya and Korea.

Under Chris's leadership, over 1,200 children with significant vision and/or hearing loss are benefiting from the institute's tailored services each year. These include screening, early intervention, preschool programs, dedicated schools, outreach and a myriad other services.

Chris Rehn, an honorary member of Carlingford Rotary Club has demonstrated just how much impact one person can make, given the right combination of passion, dedication and ability.

His remarkable achievements make Chris Rehn a most fitting recipient today, of our 2016 District Vocational Excellence award.