

# 9640 CONNECTOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROTARY DISTRICT 9640

*Connecting our clubs, celebrating service, and showing how Rotary members create lasting impact.*



## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

A new Rotary year begins with friendship, collaboration and a shared commitment to create lasting impact.

INSIDE District Changeover / Membership / Clubs in Action / Community Leaders / Youth Programs / Conference 2027

FROM THE DISTRICT GOVERNOR

## A MESSAGE FROM DG DEB

### Welcome to the very first edition of the 9640 Connector for our 2026-27 Rotary year!

Firstly, thank you for your patience while I navigated getting our District newsletter up and running. It has been a little more challenging than I anticipated, but we're here! A huge thank you to Matt Browning from the Rotary Club of Maclean, who has graciously taken on the role of newsletter editor. I'm incredibly grateful to have him on board.

What a start to our Rotary year it has been.

Our District Changeover was everything I could have hoped for and more. More than 120 Rotarians, family, friends and special guests gave up their Sunday to celebrate Immediate Past District Governor John and to welcome me into the role of District Governor. Looking around that room and seeing so many familiar faces was something I won't forget.

Becoming District Governor has been a two-year training process, supported by so many people along the way, and that support certainly hasn't stopped now that the badge is on!

There have been moments during those two years when I genuinely questioned whether I was worthy of the role, or whether I would be able to navigate everything that came with it. But as I begin this year, I can say with absolute certainty that I am ready.

I'm incredibly grateful to the members of District 9640 for placing your faith in me to lead our District this year. I don't take that privilege lightly, and I promise to give it everything I have.

Craig and I certainly haven't wasted any time putting kilometres under our belts! We were fortunate to attend 20 club changeovers, and I'd like to warmly welcome every incoming President and Board member across our District. Thank you for putting your hands up to lead your clubs and serve your members this year.

Since then, the official DG visits have begun, and what we are seeing on the road makes me incredibly excited about the year ahead.

We have a fantastic District!

We have long-established traditional clubs alongside clubs embracing more flexible models. We have Rotarians with decades of experience working beside people who are brand new to Rotary. And we have clubs delivering an extraordinary variety of projects in their local communities and around the world.

But one thing I've particularly loved seeing is the friendship.

The laughter around the tables. The genuine affection members have for one another. The people who turn up because they enjoy being together as much as they enjoy serving together.

Those friendships will keep us strong.

And that brings me to our District theme this year... "Strength in Numbers".

It isn't about growing membership, it's about recognising how much stronger we become when we work together, clubs partnering with clubs, Rotary working alongside community other organisations and businesses, members sharing ideas and resources, and all of us looking beyond the boundaries of our own club.

Combine that Strength in Numbers with Rotary International President Yinka Babalola's call to Create Lasting Impact, and I think we have something special to build on this year.

Two things you'll see a strong focus on from me are communication and recognition.

We now have all six of our Rotary Community Groups supported by a Rotary Community Leader, helping us strengthen communication and connection between neighbouring clubs. You'll meet those six wonderful people a little further into this newsletter.

And I want us to get better at sharing what we're doing. If your club has a great project, tell us. If you need another pair of hands, ask us. If you're holding an event, invite us. If another club is doing something brilliant, celebrate them.

There are so many exciting things happening across District 9640 over the year, and I want the 9640 Connector to become a place where we can find ways to support one another, borrow great ideas, celebrate our successes and recognise the people quietly making a difference every day.

And amongst all the kilometres, club visits, meetings, emails and everything else that comes with being District Governor, I should probably tell you something else...

I am having the best time and I know without a doubt that I wouldn't be enjoying this role nearly as much without my beautiful husband right beside me.

This wasn't Craig's dream, it was mine. Rotary is my passion, and becoming District Governor was something I chose to pursue, not Craig. And yet, here he is. Beside me at every opportunity, clocking up the kilometres, walking into another Rotary meeting, getting to know our members and supporting me every step of the way. I couldn't do this alone. And truthfully, I wouldn't even want to. So thank you, my love.

And I know I'm not the only one. So many of you have incredible partners who support you too, they come to the events, share you with your club and your community, and so often quietly make it possible for you to do what you do. So, consider this your little reminder to give them an extra hug, and please, give them one from me too.

Our District is stronger because of every one of our partners, thank you to all of our Rotary partners, we appreciate you more than you know.

So, here we go - our first 9640 Connector and the beginning of what I know is going to be a wonderful year. Let's stay connected, celebrate each other, have some fun along the way and see just how much we can achieve when we embrace our Strength in Numbers and Create Lasting Impact together.

*DG Deb xox*

CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP

# DISTRICT CHANGEOVER

## *The Perfect Start to Our Rotary Year*

More than 130 Rotarians and guests gathered at the Currumbin RSL to celebrate the District 9640 Changeover, marking the transition of leadership from Outgoing District Governor John Oomen to District Governor Deb Frugtiet.

The afternoon celebrated a year of "Unite for Good" under DG John Oomen's leadership, with awards recognising the achievements of clubs and members across the district. Thank you, John and Narelle, for your leadership and service throughout 2025-2026.

Past District Governor Sandra Doumany officially installed District Governor Deb Frugtiet, who shared her vision for the year ahead, introduced her District Leadership Team, and embraced her theme, "Strength in Numbers," together with RI President-Elect Olayinka Babalola's message, "Create Lasting Impact."

A special highlight was the heartfelt speeches from Deb and Craig's daughters, Macy and Lily, reminding us of the important role families play in supporting Rotary leaders.

With friendship, inspiration and enthusiasm filling the room, District 9640 is ready for a year of connection, collaboration and lasting impact.

Congratulations to Immediate Past District Governor John Oomen on a successful year of Unite for Good, and best wishes to District Governor Deb Frugtiet and Craig for an outstanding 2026-2027



District 9640 Changeover at Currumbin RSL.



THE ROTARY YEAR

## JULY - TRANSITION MONTH

**A new Rotary year brings new leaders, new opportunities and a chance to build on everything those before us have achieved. July was a month of changeovers across District 9640, celebrating those handing over the reins and welcoming the Presidents, Boards and leaders stepping forward to serve in 2026-27.**



## AUGUST - MEMBERSHIP MONTH



We began our Rotary year on 1 July with exactly 1,000 Rotarians across District 9640. Today, we have 1,026 Rotarians, a net growth of 26 in less than two months! Alongside our 32 Rotaractors.

Across our district, we have 52 Rotary clubs, 4 satellite clubs and 3 Rotaract clubs, that is a sensational start to our year and absolutely something worth celebrating.

While I'm incredibly proud to see our numbers growing, my focus as Governor has never been growth for growth's sake.

For me, our priority must be retention and club culture. Let's build clubs where people feel valued and heard. Where they know they belong. Where we're flexible enough to recognise that Rotary needs to fit around family, work and busy lives. And where we check in with one another, not simply as fellow Rotarians, but as friends.

Our Rotary International theme asks us to Create Lasting Impact, I believe that impact has to start with each other.

People stay longer, contribute more and enjoy Rotary more when they're surrounded by people they genuinely consider friends.

## Tell Your Rotary Story

When someone asks you about Rotary, don't tell them "what" Rotary is, they can Google that. Instead, share with them how Rotary has impacted on you personally. Share what Rotary has meant to you, tell them about the friendships, the experiences, the growth and the opportunities. The project that touched your heart, the moment you realised you were part of something much bigger than your own club.

And then get curious about them. Instead of immediately asking what they could bring to Rotary, ask: "How could Rotary support you?"

Could we connect them with people in their community or business?

Could one of our youth programs help a young person in their family or workplace grow into a confident leader?

Are they involved with another community organisation that could use our support, connections or volunteers?

Or perhaps they're simply looking for friendship, purpose and somewhere they feel they belong. Let's start with what we can offer people, not what we want from them.

Because when people find genuine connection and purpose, membership becomes so much more than joining an organisation. It becomes belonging.

## WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

*Celebrating Our Newest Rotarians.*

What a wonderful way to begin our year. Since 1 July, District 9640 has achieved a net growth of 26 Rotarians, taking us from exactly 1,000 to 1,026 members. Behind that number are people, new personalities, new ideas, new friendships and new possibilities for our clubs and communities.

To every new Rotarian who has joined us during July and August: Welcome.

We are so glad you're here. We hope you find friendship, purpose, plenty of laughter and the opportunity to make your own lasting impact.

## YEARS OF SERVICE

*Celebrating a Lifetime of Impact.*

Behind every year of Rotary service is a story. This year we recognise members reaching significant milestones of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years and beyond of service to Rotary. When you put all of those years together, imagine the collective volunteer hours represented here, and the people, families and communities whose lives have been touched because these Rotarians chose to serve.

Each member celebrating a milestone will receive a Certificate of Service from the District Governor, with those reaching 20 years and above also receiving recognition from Rotary International President Yinka Babalola.

These aren't simply numbers. They represent years of showing up, giving back and making a difference.

PEOPLE OF ACTION

## ROTARIANS CREATING LASTING IMPACT

Sometimes the best way to understand Rotary's impact is through the people quietly creating it. Throughout the year, we'll shine a light on members from across District 9640 whose service, commitment and actions embody what it means to Create Lasting Impact. Not because they seek recognition, but because their stories remind us of what one person, or one partnership can achieve when they choose to make a difference.



This month, we're shining a light on Vicki Kersey from the Rotary Club of Burleigh. Although Vicki has only been a Rotarian for a few years, she certainly hasn't wasted any time making an impact. She has already served on her club's Board and is now proudly leading Burleigh as Club President. Alongside her husband John, Vicki is also incredibly active in Rotary Youth Exchange, opening her heart and home to young people from around the world.

Vicky's commitment to service extends well beyond Rotary. She has volunteered with Friends with Dignity for more than 10 years, supporting people and families when they need it most. At her recent Presidential Changeover, Vicky was recognised with a Paul Harris Fellow, a very fitting acknowledgement of the contribution she continues to make.

It doesn't take long after meeting Vicki to realise she embodies exactly what we want to celebrate in this section, Rotarians creating lasting impact, both through Rotary and in their wider community.

Thank you, Vic, for everything you do for Rotary and for our community. We're very lucky to have you.

CLUBS IN ACTION

## CLUBS CREATING LASTING IMPACT

**Across District 9640, clubs are joining forces with neighbouring Rotary clubs, community organisations, businesses and other groups to share resources, ideas,**

**volunteers and connections. This is Strength in Numbers in action, partnerships that allow us to reach further, achieve more and Create Lasting Impact in our communities.**

### Rotary SAFE Families: Towards Respectful Relationships



Well, Rotary SAFE Families has completed providing the Towards Respectful Relationships program at its first school. Thank you Rotary Hawthorn for sponsoring the Sophia Mundi Steiner School, Abbotsford. Our Award Giving event was attended by President Ian, Vincent Chen, Min Bell and Dorothy along with PP Ronald Moss, Caroline Springs and a very special visitor the creator of the TRR Program, Ginny Giorgio, Rotary Kingscliff, NSW.

I wish more Hawthorn members could have been part of this amazing successful program. The students were amazing to work with, so respectful and they loved the opportunity to create a film that will be used to promote respectful relationships to students at Victorian schools. We had 50 plus parents, teachers, students, Victoria

I literally still have "goose bumps" after a student from each of the three groups of students introduced their film for viewing. We provided the two main awards, the Rotary SAFE Families/Rotary Hawthorn Award and the Student Choice Award.

The school was so impressed by the students' work, they provided a third award - the Recognition of Teamwork Award. Their fantastic teacher Zacharey Jane is seen here giving the Steiner School Teamwork Award.

The school has asked if we could sponsor them next year as the students gained much confidence and understanding of a respectful relationship versus an abusive relationship.

Here are the students minus three who have gone to France for 6 months on exchange with French students. I created a framed Certificate of Recognition for each student presented by Ginny Giorgio.



Some of the comments the students provided included:

"This is the best thing we've done for a long time at school!"

"I have learnt more about domestic violence, having a clear understanding of how I can prevent domestic violence. I have learnt how to edit a film, operate a proper camera, the "3R's" of prevention and learning what a respectful relationship is."

I am now completing the program at the Melbourne Montessori School with Rotary Brighton North and heading in Term 3 with Min Bell, to the Grange School, (a public school with 64 diverse cultures ) in Werribee.

The most extraordinary and exciting outcome is that Victoria Police are now approaching me to meet with them from 4 Divisions covering Melton, Boroondara, Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham and Werribee. The Police Proactive Policing Operations are seeking ways to interact with young people and have seen that the Towards Respectful Relationships Program gives them this opportunity. I am so delighted that Rotary SAFE Families is being acknowledged by Police.

Onwards and Upwards!



## Alstonville: Books for Papua New Guinea

Alstonville - Thanks to Wayne Crawford from Rotary Club of Ballina on Richmond for accepting a donation of children's books for PNG. Rotary Club of Alstonville acted as the conduit for a donation from St Carthages Primary School library Rotary and the community working together.



## Broadwater North: Standing Against Domestic and Family Violence



Broadwater North - We were proud to support the 3rd Annual Kelly Wilkinson Foundation Lunch.

At the Rotary Club of Broadwater North, one of our four key areas of focus is Domestic and Family Violence prevention and awareness. Supporting organisations like the Kelly Wilkinson Foundation is one way we can help create safer communities, raise awareness, and stand alongside those working tirelessly to end domestic and family violence.

Together, we can all play a part in creating change.

## Hope Island: \$35,300 Raised

Hope Island - \$35,300 RAISED! What an incredible result!

Now that the dust has settled (and the pink tutus have been packed away! ), we're absolutely thrilled to share the final result from the 2026 Rotary Golf Day...

Together, we raised an incredible \$35,300 profit!

This simply wouldn't have been possible without our amazing golfers, volunteers, supporters and sponsors. Every team that played, every raffle ticket purchased, every auction bid, every laugh shared, and every dollar donated has helped make a real difference.

A huge thank you to our incredible sponsors who backed the event so generously.

To everyone who played, sponsored, donated, volunteered or simply cheered us on... thank you.



## Evans Head: Fishing Classic Fundraiser

Evans Head Rotary was once again serving hot chips, sausage sandwiches and cold drinks each evening at the Evans Head Fishing Classic.

As one of Australia's flagship fishing tournaments, the Classic is also a valuable fundraiser for the club. It's Rotary in action-raising funds while being part of a much-loved community event.



## Stanthorpe: Aging Well

Stanthorpe - With support from a District 9640 Grant, the Rotary Club of Stanthorpe has helped bring local seniors together through its Aging Well events.

Monthly morning teas have brought around 40 seniors together for entertainment, guest speakers and connection, while close to 400 people enjoyed the Seniors Concert at the 2026 Apple and Grape Harvest Festival.

These events have helped strengthen social connections, reduce isolation and celebrate the important place seniors have in our communities.

A great example of a District Grant in action!



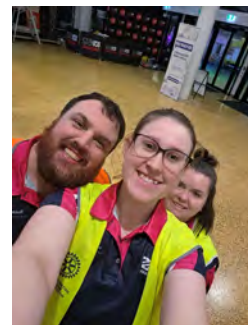
## Rotaract Queensland at the Ekka

Rotaract - What an incredible week bringing all the Rotaract clubs from across Queensland together to celebrate 150 years of the Ekka!

This year, Rotaract Queensland created a spectacular fruit and vegetable artwork inspired by the iconic Ekka Strawberry Sundae and all the rides and attractions that make the Ekka such a special event. From painting backboards late into the night, to carefully placing every single piece of fruit and vegetable, setting up train tracks, and building LEGO roller coasters, it truly was a labour of love. The finished display is something we're all incredibly proud of!

It was fantastic to meet so many amazing Rotaractors from across the districts, and work together on such a unique community project. A huge thank you to Kimberley Randall and the team from Rotaract Club of Brisbane Rivercity for facilitating this incredible initiative. We can't wait for the opportunity to work with you and your club on future events.

This display is a fantastic opportunity to showcase Rotaract Queensland and our local clubs to the wider community, highlighting the impact Rotaractors make through service, fellowship, and fun.





STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

## PARTNERING OPPORTUNITIES

Could Your Club Be the Missing Piece? You don't always have to create the next great project from scratch. Sometimes another Rotary club or community organisation already has a fantastic idea, they simply need more hands, expertise, connections, funding or a partner willing to say: "We're in."

This section will share opportunities from across our District and beyond where collaboration could make something bigger possible, from local community projects to international and global projects. See something that sparks your interest? Reach out. Start a conversation. That's Strength in Numbers.

### Set Free Care

SET FREE CARE looks beyond immediate relief to break the cycle of difficulty. Every week, at their Southport Hub the Set Free facility transforms into a gateway for long-term transformation, connecting guests with professional networks specializing in housing placement, mental health care, addiction recovery, and employment and training pathways.

Their extraordinary capacity to provide targeted services and a crisis was powerfully demonstrated during Cyclone Alfred, when the hub worked around the clock to step into critical gaps in disaster relief. While standard evacuation centres lacked emergency bedding, Set Free Care rapidly established a 100-bed emergency shelter, providing safe, warm accommodation, hot showers, and three hot meals a day to the region's highly vulnerable rough sleepers.

If you or your club would like to support SET FREE CARE, feel free to contact the team.

[www.setfreecare.org](http://www.setfreecare.org)

### YOUR DISTRICT TEAM

## MEET YOUR ROTARY COMMUNITY LEADERS

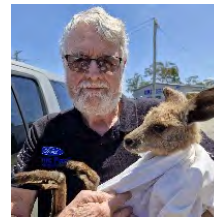
**Our six Rotary Community Groups now each have a dedicated Rotary Community Leader, creating another important connection between our clubs. Their role is about communication, collaboration and helping neighbouring clubs find opportunities to work together. A huge thank you to the six Rotarians who have stepped forward to take on these roles.**

### Group 1: Robert Blanchard - Grafton



Alstonville, Alstonville Plateau Satellite, Ballina-On-Richmond, Ballina Lifestyle Satellite, Byron Bay, Casino, Evans Head, Grafton, Grafton Middy, Illuka-Woombah, Maclean, Mullumbimby, Upper Richmond, Yamba

### Group 2: David Kenny - Beaudesert



Beaudesert, Boonah, Jimboomba, Scenic Rim Rotaract, SEQ Wildlife Rescue

### Group 3: Rock O'Keefe - Gold Coast



Burleigh Heads, Broadwater North, Gold Coast, GC Corporate, Mermaid Beach, Young Mermaid Satellite, Surfers Sunrise, Surfers Paradise

### Group 4: Bruce Kuhn - Murwillumbah Central

Ashmore, Broadbeach, Broadwater Southport, Coomera River, Coomera Valley, E-Club Next Gen, Hope Island, Mudgeeraba, Nerang, Nth GC Rotaract, Parkwood, Southern Star Rotex

### Group 5: Nerida Dean - Mullumbimby



Banora Tweed, Currumbin Coolangatta Tweed, Goonellabah, Kingscliff, Kyogle, Lismore, Lismore West, Mt Warning AM, Murwillumbah, Murwillumbah Central, Summerland Sunrise

### Group 6: Perdita O'Connor - The Granite Belt



Allora, Goondiwindi, Stanthorpe, Stanthorpe Flexitime Satellite, Tenterfield, The Granite Belt, Warwick, Warwick Sunrise



## CLUB CONNECTIONS

# DG DEB & CRAIG ON THE ROAD

*Where Have We Been and Where Are We Heading?*

The kilometres are certainly adding up! One of the best parts of this year is getting around the tables with our clubs. Craig and I are loving seeing Rotary in action, hearing what matters to you as members and, of course, sharing plenty of laughs along the way.

## Club visits

Ashmore - wed 5th Aug  
Alstonville - Tue 11th Aug Allora, Warwick and sunrise - Wed 1st Sep  
Ballina - Thu 17th Sep Ballina Satellite - Tue 18th Aug  
Banora Tweed - Mon 14th Sep Broadwater Southport - 23rd Oct  
Broadbeach - Tue 17th Nov Byron Bay - Tue 29th Sep  
Coomera Valley - Mon 17th Aug Eclub - Tue 8th Sep  
Evans Head - Mon 21st Sep Goonelabah - Tue 25th Aug  
Hope Island - Wed 16th Sep Illuka Woombah - Wed 2nd Sep  
Jimboomba - Tue 15th Sep Lismore - Mon 10th Aug  
Lismore West - thur 3rd Sep  
Kingscliff - Wed 7th Oct  
Maclean Thur 13th Aug  
Mullumbimby - Thur 15th Oct  
Mudgeeraba - Tue 6th Oct Nerang - wed 19th Aug  
Parkwood - Tue 22nd Sep  
Surfers Sunrise - wed 9th Sep  
Yamba - Tue 13th Sep

## Snapshots from the road



Maclean, Alstonville, Lismore, Ashmore, Ballina on Richmond Lifestyle Satellite, Nerang and Coomera Valley.

a perfect day for a BBQ at the Caravan & Camping Show with Rotary Club of Lismore. The members love getting their aprons on and tongs in hand because they know the positive impact they're having on the community. With their time and energy, the members can support Lismore Base Hospital with \$7000 equipment for Prostate Cancer. Sponsor students at Richmond River High School, help the team at Powerhouse Museum restore historical motors, plus so much more . The difference this club makes to many, is life changing



## Strength in Numbers: SEQ Wildlife Club

Craig and I absolutely loved being part of the working bee with SEQ Wildlife Club. What an incredible job President Russell and his team are doing to protect and care for our precious wildlife. We're so pleased to continue supporting them, and next time there's a working bee, we'll be sure to let you all know, come along, lend a hand and see the impact this wonderful team is making firsthand!



*Working bee with the SEQ Wildlife Club.*

**If your club isn't listed here and you haven't yet locked in a visit with Deb and Craig, please get in touch, we'd love to come and see you. Email: [dg2627@rotary9640.org](mailto:dg2627@rotary9640.org)**



## WHAT'S COMING UP ACROSS DISTRICT 9640

You might see an idea that inspires something in your own club. Perhaps a neighbouring club needs a few extra volunteers. Maybe a cause aligns perfectly with something you're passionate about and you'd like to lend a hand.

And if it's a ticketed event? Let's show up for each other. Supporting another club's event is one of the simplest ways we can put Strength in Numbers into action, and you might just have a great time while you're doing it!

*Upcoming club and district events. Refer to the artwork for event details and booking information.*

## DISTRICT CONFERENCE

# STANTHORPE 2027



<https://portal.clubrunner.ca/50205/Event/rotary-district-9640-conference-2027>

A weekend away with your friends... and there just happens to be a Rotary Conference on too!

Now, this one needs to go in the diary. Picture a weekend away in beautiful Stanthorpe with your Rotary family, wineries, great food, apple picking, bushwalking, golf, shopping, a fabulous Wine and Opera Dinner and a Country & Western Hoedown. Oh... and we're squeezing a Rotary Conference in there somewhere too!

Our District 9640 Conference is shaping up to be a weekend that's as much about friendship, connection and fun as it is about Rotary. And the conference itself is only \$90 per person. That includes the Saturday and Sunday conference program, fantastic guest speakers, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea on Saturday, plus morning tea on Sunday before we all head off to "Church." And no, we haven't suddenly become that well behaved. Our kind of "Church" happens to be a wonderful Stanthorpe hospitality venue showcasing wines from across the Granite Belt.

Sounds much more like us don't you think lol!

Try Booking Link:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1606555>

See promotional video and further information on the District Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RotaryDistrict9640/videos/its-official-district-9640-conference-2027get-ready-for-an-unforgettable-rotary-1011199544965176/>

Tickets for the conference are available now. The additional weekend activities and dinners will be released a little later, but for now there are two things to do...

Book your \$90 conference ticket & book your accommodation. Do those two things and you're halfway there. Get your club together, make a weekend of it and come and experience Stanthorpe with us.

## YOUTH SERVICE

# ROTARY CREATES LEADERS

*A message from PDG Ross Smith*

I write with much pride and delight to report that our Rotary District 9640 high school delegates have taken out the National Award in the Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA) 2026 - First Place MUNA 2026.

This event is a long weekend in Canberra with debate on six Resolutions of global importance. It is conducted on the green, leather sofas of the Old House of Representatives. The building is a heritage site and we are invariably honoured to use these national facilities which are coming up to being 100 years old next year.

There were 26 teams of three senior high school students from Rotary Districts all over the nation. They debate and vote upon six Resolutions of national and international importance, from Global Food Security, through Peace, Security and Sustainable Development, Countering Hate Speech and, finally, Support for Lasting Peace in Ukraine.

The Friday and Saturday evening dinners featured inspiring speakers including Air Commodore Jarrod Pendlebury CSC, the Director-General Strategy and Plans in Airforce Headquarters and past Australian Military Advisor to the UN and Janice Rodrigues, Australia's 2026 Youth Representative to the UN.

This is an outstanding youth program of Rotary and I am proud to have taken on the role of District Head Judge and National Counsellor and Coach to the District team, once again this year. I am also grateful to one of the students' outstanding and respected teachers for accompanying us for this rare opportunity.

Special thanks to the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise for hosting this program in the National Capital for 27 years, our District Youth Chair Susan Howard and our District Governor Deb Frugtniet for their ongoing commitment to this outstanding youth opportunity.

What an incredible achievement for our District, and one we should all be enormously proud of!

A huge thank you to our District Youth Chair, Susan Howard, for the wonderful job she has done bringing MUNA together, PDG Ross Smith for dedicating his time and leadership to these young people over the weekend, and to the team of Rotarians who worked behind the scenes to support this fantastic program. Thank you also to every club that sponsored a team and, most importantly, to the students who stepped up, represented their schools and our District, and embraced this incredible opportunity.

MUNA is Rotary raising up our young leaders in action. It gives young people the opportunity to find their voice, challenge their thinking, build confidence and discover that their ideas really can make a difference.

So, here's my challenge to every club for MUNA 2027, start talking to your local high schools now! Tell them about MUNA, encourage them to put forward a team, and consider sponsoring those students to take part.

Let's see how many more young people from across District 9640 we can give this opportunity to in 2027. And to our 2026 National Champions, congratulations! What an achievement, and what a wonderful way to represent District 9640.





*District 9640's MUNA 2026 representatives and National Champions.*

## NEXT EVENT

2027 (Date TBC)

Tweed Heads Civic Centre

Cnr Brett & Wharf Sts

Tweed Heads NSW 2485

~\$400 per team (sponsorship available)

## RYTS (Rotary Youth Transition Seminar)

Designed for Year 11-12 students, RYTS helps young people build confidence, leadership skills, teamwork, decision-making abilities, and lifelong friendships as they prepare for life beyond school.

13-18 December 2026

Bornhoffen PCYC, Natural Bridge QLD

\$825 per student\*(sponsorship available)\*

For more info--- <https://rotary9640.org/page/ryts>

## RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards)

A leadership and personal development program for 20-30 year olds, RYLA provides an unforgettable experience focused on leadership, personal growth, citizenship, and connecting with other emerging leaders.

17-23 January 2027

Camp Cooby, Geham QLD

\$1,100 per participant\*(sponsorship available)\*

The Rotary Club of Burleigh Heads has sponsorship funding available to assist suitable applicants with attending these life-changing programs.

For more info--- <https://rotary9640.org/page/ryla>

If you'd like to learn more or apply for sponsorship, please email [hannah.sunde@gmail.com](mailto:hannah.sunde@gmail.com).

Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to develop leadership skills, meet amazing people, and create lifelong connections!

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

## A MESSAGE FROM RI PRESIDENT YINKA BABALOLA



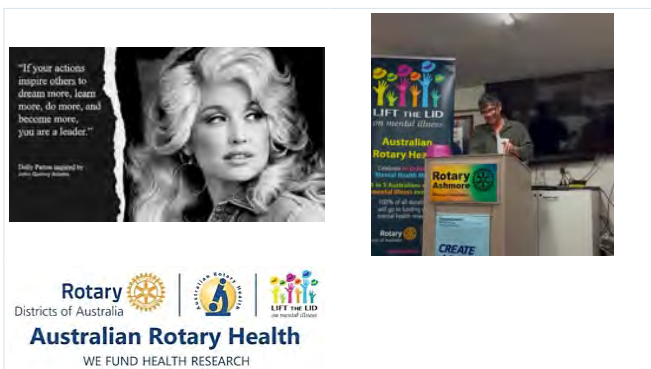
Create Lasting Impact. Rotary International President Olayinka “Yinka” Babalola has challenged us this year to think carefully about what it really means to Create Lasting Impact. That means strengthening what we do through partnerships, with neighbouring clubs, community organisations and others who share our goals, rather than always trying to do everything ourselves.

It means sharing our personal Rotary stories and helping others understand not simply what Rotary does, but how Rotary changes lives, including our own. It also means setting measurable goals and challenging ourselves to improve, including membership and retention, support for The Rotary Foundation, and our continued commitment to ending polio.

Creating lasting impact isn’t about doing more for the sake of doing more. It’s about making what we do matter more, last longer and reach further.

MENTAL HEALTH

## CRAIG’S PARTNER PROJECT



### Australian Rotary Health - Lift the Lid on Mental Illness

This year, Craig’s Partner Project shines a light on something that touches almost every family and community in some way, mental health. Through Australian Rotary Health and Lift the Lid on Mental Illness, we’re encouraging every club across District 9640 to hold at least one Lift the Lid activity during the Rotary year.

It doesn’t have to be huge. Have some fun with it! Host a morning tea, dinner, crazy-hat event, community walk, trivia night, or come up with something completely unique to your community.

Better still: Invite another club to do it with you. It’s another opportunity to put Strength in Numbers into practice while raising awareness and funds for vital mental health research.

[www.australianrotaryhealth.org.au](http://www.australianrotaryhealth.org.au)

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

## SUPPORT ROMAC



Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children (ROMAC) provides life-saving and dignity restoring medical treatment for children from countries across our Oceania region who cannot access the specialist care they need at home. But a child’s ROMAC experience isn’t only about hospitals and medical appointments.

**MORE TO COME...** This is our first 9640 Connector, and I’d love to see it grow into something that truly belongs to all of us. Send us your stories. Send us your photos. Tell us about your projects, your members, your partnerships, your events and the things happening in your club that deserve to be celebrated. Because across 52 Rotary clubs, 4 satellite clubs and 3 Rotaract clubs, there are so many great stories to tell. Let’s tell them.



IN MEMORIAM

# VALE LYNDA BATTIG

*Remembering a dedicated member of the Rotary Club of Gold Coast.*



Lynda Battig, one of our dedicated members, has sadly passed away after a serious illness followed by a significant fall which resulted in a lengthy hospitalisation.

Lynda has been actively involved with our Botanical Bazaar in recent years, taking on key roles to make it the great success it has been. Lynda was also a strong supporter of our Bunnings BBQs, RizeUp pantry packing and had attended many club meetings over the three years she was a member.

**We will all miss Lynda's smile and willingness to help others in need.**

WELCOME TO ROTARY

# NEW MEMBERS - JULY AND AUGUST

*District 9640 welcomes 37 new members across 20 clubs.*

## Allora

Louisa Aldridge

## Ballina on Richmond

Sharon Clark  
Peter Howes  
Eric Jackson

## Beaudesert

Wayne Hosier  
Linda Mahaffy

## Broadbeach

Peter Sutton  
John Wallace

## Broadwater North

Kristina Janjic

## Broadwater Southport

Jack Pyziakos

## Burleigh

Frank Dolan  
Danielle Dunsmore  
Gae Ferris  
Peter Brown

## Coomera Valley

John Clarke

## Currumbin Coolangatta Tweed

Suzy Hudson

## EClub Next Generation

Roger Cameron

## Gold Coast Corporate

Eric Flammans  
Elsa Mustafa  
Stewart Rodrigues

## Hope Island

Angus Dallas

## Iluka Woombah

Beverly Chara

## Jimboomba

Sigrid Avery  
Brett Dummond  
Leigh O'Brien  
Geoff Varnam  
Patricia Varnam

## Mudgeeraba

Diana Wilkins

## Murwillumbah Central

Kylie Lee  
Quinn Stirling Soenen

## Parkwood

Noriko Teranishi

## Surfers Sunrise

Lucy Cole  
Russell Lush

## Upper Richmond

Lynette Elliott  
Robert Retford  
Julianne Robertson

## Yamba

Rosemary Jobber





### Where is RYLA?

RYLA takes place at Camp Cooby, located north of Toowoomba, an inviting venue with scenic lake views and a welcoming staff committed to providing the best opportunities and experiences for participants. Transportation to RYLA is provided by bus, departing on Sunday morning and returning on Saturday evening.

### How is it Funded?

Successful applicants are sponsored/ co-sponsored by Rotary clubs or their employer.

This means that applications don't have to pay to come to RYLA!

### How Do You Apply for RYLA?

Applying for RYLA is easy!

Scan the QR code to fill out a 2027 application form →



If your application is successful, you'll be contacted by a RYLA leader and invited to attend a Rotary meeting with your potential sponsor club. You will also receive all the necessary information prior to RYLA to ensure you're fully prepared for a life-changing week.

### Take Up the RYLA Challenge

Do you have what it takes to become a dynamic leader and change not only yourself but the world around you?

By applying for RYLA, you will be taking the first step in realising your leadership potential.



### Find Out More:

 @RYLADISTRICT9620

 ryladistrict9620@gmail.com

Follow us on social media to ensure you're up to date on all RYLA announcements.

Why not take a break from your everyday life and explore this personal and professional development opportunity!

**Rotary**  
District 9620



Rotary Youth  
Leadership  
Awards

# Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

*RYLA – Empowering the leaders of tomorrow and inspiring positive change in the community*

**Dates:**

17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2027

**Location:**

Camp Cooby  
Geham QLD



## Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) is an exciting and challenging program designed to equip current and aspiring leaders, aged 20 to 30, with the personal, leadership, and citizenship skills needed to thrive in all aspects of life.

Set in a rural environment, the program offers participants an unforgettable experience filled with learning, personal growth, and plenty of laughter.

## The RYLA Experience

Your RYLA experience begins the moment you step onto the bus, where leaders and fellow participants are eager to help you make the most of this incredible opportunity.

RYLA brings together talented, like-minded individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage in seminars, workshops, outdoor adventures, and reflective exercises.

Of course, no experience is complete without fun! Daily activities and sessions are designed to keep you energized and on your toes throughout the RYLA week.

## Why RYLA is for you

Whether you're a young professional, a tertiary student, or anywhere in between, RYLA offers an incredible opportunity to learn, grow, have fun, and make new friends.

Participants who embark on the RYLA journey often find they can successfully apply the skills they've gained to their personal lives and careers, while also making a positive impact on their communities.

Additionally, Rotary initiatives and local Rotaract Clubs work closely with participants, inspiring them to create, support, or contribute to projects that address both local and global issues.

## What Makes RYLA Special?

### The People

"Everyone at RYLA was there for different reasons, but we all seemed to be on the same wavelength from the start. I was able to form new friends and I developed a support network for my everyday life."



### The Program

"I'm not sure I've ever been through such an intense, valuable and fun program. The learnings from the activities related directly to our everyday lives as young adults – core values, personality types, teamwork, communications, goal setting, time management and leadership; all while having a lot of fun!"

### The Challenges

"RYLA challenged me to face my fears, to step out of my comfort zone, and gave me the confidence to deal with unfamiliar situations and different (or difficult) people".

### Rotary

"RYLA brought together three nations, creating international friendships. The program afforded participants the opportunity to learn more about Rotary and how we could get involved in our local communities".

## What will you Gain from RYLA?

At the end of RYLA, participants are equipped with personal, leadership and citizenship skills which position them for success in all areas of their life.

**Specifically, RYLA's learning outcomes are:**

### Personal Development

- Y Develop an understanding of the uniqueness of oneself
- Y Develop lifelong learning skills
- Y Display appropriate communication skills
- Y Display self-confidence

### Leadership

- Y Identify the qualities of a leader
- Y Promote team work
- Y Embrace change
- Y Create an action plan which ensures:
  - The transfer of key program learnings
  - Life-long learning habits

### Citizenship

- Y Discuss the purpose of good citizenship
- Y Understand and promote the values of Rotary

In addition to all of this, you'll walk away from the RYLA program with new memories, friendships and a support network which lasts a lifetime.

In the words of past participants, *"RYLA was the best week of my life"*.

