



May Peace Prevail on Earth



During this time when many of us are preparing for joyous and peaceful family celebration, we are reminded by the tragic event that occurred at Bondi Beach last Sunday afternoon of the importance of constantly remind ourselves of that which many of us take for granted in Australia – PEACE.

The words below are words written over 2500 years ago by Chinese philosopher Laozi.

These words have been used by many when promoting Peace or dedicating our Rotary Peace Poles around the globe and District 9640. These words seem most appropriate to me in times like now.

If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace between nations.
If there is to be peace between nations, there must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbours.
If there is to be peace between neighbours, there must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.

The following is a message from Regional Council, Interim Chair, Neville Parsons that says it all.

“Rotary is committed to promoting peace, goodwill, and understanding. It was founded on the belief that lasting change comes from respect, compassion, and working together for the greater good.

In the face of acts of terror and violence, we must continue committing to peace through dialogue and service. There is no place in our communities, Australia or elsewhere, for violence, fear, or division. In times like these, it is more important than ever that we stand united, support one another, and reaffirm our shared humanity and purpose.

Our thoughts are with the victims, their families, and all who have been impacted. We encourage everyone to support one another and uphold the values that Unite Us.”





December 2025 - Welcome to your District Newsletter

Dear Rotary Friends,

Not so many years ago I can remember how I felt when I was informed that our District Governor's Club visit was to be our next meeting. Here was a person who I generally didn't know, but should respect. I thought it was an inspection of the troops, to make sure we were following the rules; to encourage us to attend conferences.

As part of the Pilot, the DG role changed. DGs of a District that are part of the Pilot are no longer allowed to tell Clubs that you must welcome a visit from DG. We must be invited to visit.

Narelle and I have had the privilege to have been invited to 60% of the Clubs to date and we have learnt much about who you are and what we need to do to support your community work through Rotary. I make a point of not lecturing; I listen and learn and help find solutions when needed. I'd much prefer an open conversation and to connect you and your Club to your District.

My travels have revealed similar threads from Clubs; a deep passion for community and youth as well as our challenges with understanding the changing relationships with District due to the Pilot. This is the second year of not having Assistant Governors (AG). The role of AG was replaced with Rotary Community Leaders (RCL) in 2024/25 and the RCL role does not have the same expectations as the AG. For the Clubs that think your District has abandoned you or your AG doesn't care, maybe this is part of the reason.

I'm hearing that many Clubs miss the AG connection; as do I. But we must work with what we have and be prepared to make what we have, work with us. To this end, I'm looking at what your District can do to improve the relationship between you and your Club, your RCL and your District.

As the Pilot enters the final 6 months, there are discussions at higher levels as to the next steps. Re-districting or extending the Pilot were mentioned at Zone conference by John Hewko and these are part of these discussions happening now. We now have an opportunity to contribute our thoughts. While none of this changes who we are as Rotarians or our commitment to improving lives, I encourage your Club to take an interest and perhaps provide constructive feedback through me via (districtgovernor@rotary9640.org). I will then pass this on to the relevant committee for consideration.

My primary interest is you, our Members and our District. Without our members there is no Rotary and without Rotary, the world would be a much sadder place.

Please take a moment to continue reading, there's lots of good work happening out there. Wishing you and all those close to you a very peaceful and joyful Christmas. Let's make 2026 the best year yet!!

John.

"If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, then, you are an excellent leader."

Dolly Parton

Our Youth – Our Future

Final Call - Applications for RYTS 2026 Closing Soon!

Do you know a young person in year 11 or 12 ready to take the next big step in life?

RYTS is back for 2026 — and we're officially open for applications! RYTS is a youth personal development and leadership program guiding young people in the transition from school to life's next phase by creating connections and enhancing their life skills, confidence and leadership capability.

 Now's the time to **spread the word!** Reach out to schools, youth groups, and your community networks to help identify and encourage potential participants. Let's ensure our local youth don't miss this opportunity.

To make things easier, we've created a **School Outreach Toolkit** to help you promote RYTS effectively. If you would like a copy, email us atryts@rotary9640.org and we'll send it your way.

 Got questions or need help getting your club's awardee to camp? The RYTS team is here to support you every step of the way.

Let's make RYTS 2026 unforgettable — starting now! 



Apply
Here



Youth Exchange – Bon voyage

The 2026 Outgoing Exchange Students completed their final camp before they leave for their life changing experience in January, 2026.

The weekend of December 6th and 7th was full of excitement and nerves. Each outbound student presented their countries and host families to a room of proud parents, Rotarians and our dedicated D9640 RYE Chair Kath, committee and our Youth Director Gareth.



May the awesomeness of the Giraffe be with you. We look forward to sharing your journey when you all return. Thank you for representing Your families, Rotary and District 9640. We're very proud of you all.

Special moments

Congratulations Kathryn Koch – District 9640 RYE Chair



Spirit of McPherson Award

Kath recently won the Spirit of McPherson Award for her work with our RYE program. Nominated by the Rotary Club of Burleigh Heads, Kath and the RYE program was mentioned in parliament last month by Federal Member and Rotarian, Leon Rebello.

[Hear the speech in Parliament – Click the Pictures](#)



Congratulations Peter Old – 50 Years of Rotary Service



e-Club of NextGen Qld

On Sunday, November 23rd I was privileged to help celebrate Peter Old's 50 years of Rotary Service. I sat across from Peter and listened to his remarkable, yet humble story. Peter's life is one of Service Above Self, and not just to Rotary. He's remarkable story, told by a self-confessed shy and not very confident public speaker, is one to be heard if you have the opportunity.

Thank you Peter for your choosing Rotary as one of the ways for you to give back.

Media Release

Kingscliff Students Shine at Rotary's "Towards Respectful Relationships: First Step, Self Respect" Short Film Festival

The Rotary Club of Kingscliff hosted its annual 'Towards Respectful Relationships: First Step, Self Respect' short film festival, celebrating the creativity and insight of Kingscliff High School students as they explored themes of empathy, respect, and positive relationships.

This year's People's Choice Award and Rotary Prize were both awarded to 'Liquid Redemption', created by Kingscliff High School students Jason Edwards, Theo Walsh, Taylor Scutts, Noah Tilton, and Jake Herben.

Special commendations were also presented to the runner-up films:

- 'Unstuck', produced by Liv Ivey, Billie Hurst, Claudia Rishton-Potter, Isla Florence, and Milli Puckeridge.
- 'Roots of Respect', produced by Mackenzie Blackburn, Charlotte Waddell, Isabella Matthias, Sienna Nicole, Kyla Morton, Sonny Ellis-Halls, and Ivy Moloney.

Rotary Kingscliff President Peter Sibilant congratulated all participating students and thanked the teaching staff, community supporters, and filmmaking mentor Darius Devas for their ongoing involvement in the project.

"This program continues to empower young people to express themselves through storytelling while exploring what respect and self-worth really mean in their lives," said Mr Sibilant. "It's an inspiring collaboration between Rotary, local schools, and the wider community."

The Towards Respectful Relationships project was the vision of Rotary Club of Kingscliff member Ginny Giorgio, a former family lawyer who saw firsthand the impact of domestic and family violence. Ginny believes that empowering young people early with the tools to understand respect and empathy is key to breaking the cycle and reducing domestic violence in the future.

The Rotary Club of Kingscliff also extended appreciation to Kingscliff High School staff and facilitators, the Tweed-Byron Police DV Unit, as well as Rotary members from Kingscliff, Byron Bay, and Mullumbimby for their ongoing support.

Special thanks were given to Federal MP Justine Elliott for providing grant funding toward the project, which complemented Rotary Kingscliff's own contributions and community sponsorships, helping ensure this important youth initiative continues to grow.

Now in its fourth successful year, the Towards Respectful Relationships project has become a cornerstone of Rotary Kingscliff's youth engagement efforts and is now set to expand further across the region in 2026. The club welcomes community and sponsor support to help ensure its continued success.

For more information or to get involved, please contact:

Rotary Club of Kingscliff

Email: president@rotarykingscliff.org.au

Facebook: <https://www.cebook.com/RotaryClubKingscliff>

Club News

Ballina-On-Richmond Rotary Club

Say No to Domestic and Family Violence Campaign continues to grow as a nation-wide movement. This campaign was launched in Parliament House, Canberra, on November 5th. The 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence opened in Ballina on Thursday 27th with a breakfast and culminated in the Domestic and Family Violence Walk in Ballina on November 28th. These events don't just happen; it takes a lot of work and commitment from the organisers and supporters. Thank you all.



Yamba Rotary Club

Two new members have bolstered the ranks of this dedicated band of Rotarians. Welcome Doug and Guy to a vibrant and very personal Rotary Club. Thank you, Yamba Rotary, for your continued service, your wiliness to welcome new ideas and see opportunities. There's more to BBQs than sausages, it's the community connection.



Club News

Surfers Sunrise Rotary Club

Rough Terrain Wheelchairs is a long running project for Surfers Sunrise that has profoundly changed the lives of so many while at the same time reducing landfill.

On Saturday night, SBS World News broadcast a full 3-minute segment on the Rough Terrain Wheelchairs manufacturing from discarded bicycles. If you missed it, or want to watch it again, click on the link or the image

Missed the SBS broadcast of their wheelchairs project? **Watch it on YouTube!** [Click on this link](#)



Looking for a BBQ Van Trailer?

Fassifern Valley Rotary Club Qld is selling their feature packed, hardly used mobile kitchen.



Built in 2022 and used 4 times.

Includes a 6 x 3 metre extra long pergola which can be transported on the front of the van, solar power and lighting, hot/cold water, gas and electric certified.

They'd like to see it go to a Rotary Club.

Please contact Geoff Niethe on 0428 712756 or g.niethe@bigpond.com for full details.

Asking \$30k



District News

Leadership Sessions

November 15th and 16th was a busy weekend for our leadership team.

- **Pre-PELDS** was conducted by DGE Deb and her team to prepare President Elects for their busy year. The dates for next year's PELDS and Assemblies have been set, so save the dates. Looks like they'll be fun.
- **Our Foundation Chair PDG Lisa** hosted a very informative Foundation Seminar on the Sunday. Assisted by District Grants Chair Kaileen Casey and PDG and Foundation Chair Tony Heading amongst others, this group certainly knows how to communicate the power of The Rotary Foundation in a way that we can understand.

Save these dates: 28.02/01.03.26 – PELDS - Grafton Service Club
21.03.26 – District Assembly -Yamba (venue tbc)
28.03.26 – District Assembly - Jimboomba Community Hall



Foundation



Shaping Tomorrow Together Dinner Held

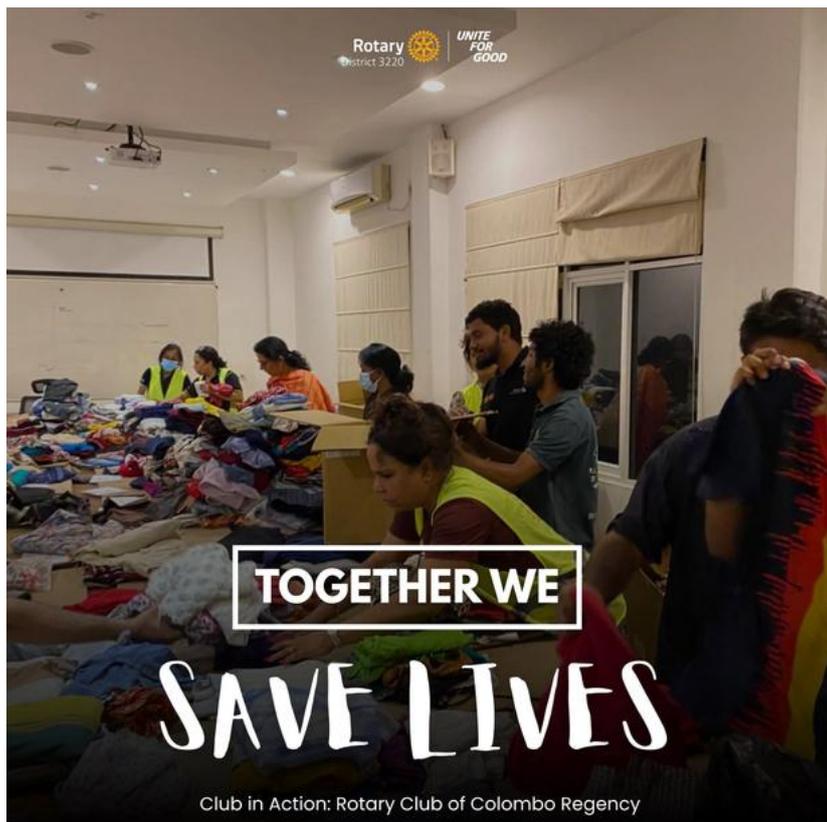
December 6th was an evening with a room full of inspiring speakers and passionate Rotarians and friends.



IPDG Lisa's vision to bring our Past RI President, Holgar Knaack, Chair of the Board of Trustees, The Rotary Foundation into District 9640 was amazing. People from most states of Australia gathered to hear Holgar speak and meet new friends. Then to be serenaded by the magnificent Michael Lapina was something that we all and particularly RCL Rob Brown, will remember forever I feel.

Thank you, Lisa, for the work you do for The Rotary Foundation and our District.

SRI LANKA CYCLONE DITWAH URGENT APPEAL FOR SUPPORT



A dedicated Disaster Response Fund for Sri Lanka is open.

Contributions to this fund:

- Are managed by Rotary Foundation.
- Allocated directly to Rotary-led relief projects in Sri Lanka.
- You will be supporting rapid, accountable aid delivery
- Qualify for Rotary Foundation recognition for your club.

Every contribution — large or small — helps rebuild homes, schools, and lives.

Sri Lanka is experiencing one of its worst natural disasters in recent years. Torrential rains, flooding and landslides triggered by Cyclone Ditwah have devastated entire regions — with 1.4 million people affected, 233,000 displaced, and homes, schools, roads, and livelihoods swept away.

Rotary Clubs across Sri Lanka are working around the clock to support survivors — and now Rotary Foundation has activated the Disaster Response Fund to strengthen these efforts.

Relief Package Overview

We are providing each family with two essential kits:

- **Back2Life Household Kit** – USD 45
Includes utensils, bedding, cleaning supplies, and basic medicines to help families return to safe, functional homes.
- **Back2Work Kit** – USD 50
Provides clothing essentials for men and women to resume work and daily life with confidence.



Narelle's Partner Project – "The Foundation and Youth"

Following on from the last couple of years, my focus is on the Rotary Foundation, our own Charity; and the Youth programs – our future.

Many clubs already support both these worthy causes, so all donations to Foundation will be counted as towards the Partner Project and the growth of the Youth Programs will give more young people the exposure to Rotary, while learning life skills.

'Every Rotarian is an Example to Youth'

RYTS (Rotary Youth Transition Seminar) is NOW open to Year 11 and 12 students. Running for a week, from 4th – 9th January. The camp has been moved from previously being in December, hoping it's more convenient for the students.

Camp is held at PCYC Bornhoffen and the students are prepared with some 'life skills' to transition from school to university or work.

Youth Exchange Outbound students are well on their way to their life changing year ahead. There are 10 students heading to various parts of the world in the months to come.

I encourage clubs to consider hosting an Exchange Student or at least invite them to speak at your club meetings. They will expand your understanding but it will also leave an impression on them. They are the future of Rotary.

How to Stay in Touch with Your District



Book Now for Your Tri-District Conference 1-3 May 2026

Click the images below or scan the QR code

