



Edition 7 - March / April 2025

Welcome to the Magic of Rotary - District 9640



This is a more jam packed update as we cover an update of travels around our district during March and April, wrap up of our District Conference at the end of March, our Rotary Community Groups and Leaders, Youth and more.

Spending time with as many clubs and members as possible provides a great opportunity to discuss our seven Areas of Focus and how we can use them to connect and promote our projects and increase awareness of Rotary. We also discuss and learn more about how we can use our Rotary Action Plan to plan, engage and adapt.

To close out February...

During February (*Peace and Conflict Resolution Month*) we celebrated Rotary World Peace Day on 23 February with a membership seminar in Grafton which brought together clubs from districts 9640 and 9660. One of our own Regional Community Leaders (RCLs) Robert Blanchard (9640) together with RCL Richie Goddard (9660) facilitated breakout sessions with clubs within their respective RCG. Special thank you, Robert, for sharing your birthday (and birthday cake) with us.

This was followed the next evening by an amazing joint meeting of our three Rotary Clubs in Murwillumbah - Murwillumbah, Murwillumbah Central and Mt Warning AM. The energy and enthusiasm in the room was amazing. We welcomed two new members to our Rotary family on the night (RC Murwillumbah Central). Thank you to John Henley, President RC Murwillumbah for making this happen.

March



During March, Rotary's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Month, we commit to create healthier communities by supplying clean water and sanitation facilities to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Do you have some stories to share from your club?

The first weekend of March was the Rotary Foundation Seminar (which brings together all of our 19 Districts that make up Zone 8). DGN Deb Frugtiet, Kaileen Casey and I all attended to continue growing our knowledge of our Rotary Foundation.

Gareth and I visited Parkwood Rotary and met one of their newest members, Jo who divides her year between Australia and Canada. She was such a positive energy at conference and I will mention this again later on, but a huge thank you to all the club members who volunteered at the District Conference.

Congrats DGE John Oomen and District L&D Chair Simone Wong for a wonderful district President-Elect Learning and Development Session (PELDS)! Great to see so many of our future club leaders come together to learn, grow, and connect, preparing to take on their roles with confidence and vision.

Charter of our newest Rotary Club of Broadwater North. The club's focus is on four key social causes -

- Domestic & Family Violence
- Homelessness
- Youth Development
- Mental Health

Congrats to DGN Deb Frugtiet for her passion and Charter President, Allan Dawson, for stepping up to lead the way.

Of course, during March TC Alfred made a visit. Please refer to the separate **Disaster Response** update for more details.

And to wrap up the month, we held our District Conference here on the northern Gold Coast. More on this later.

April



This was the first year we have a month celebrating Rotary's 7th area of focus – Environment. Whether it's organizing local cleanups, promoting sustainable land use, or supporting endangered species, your efforts can make a difference. Maybe you would like to consider connecting with [Rotary Action Groups](#) that work on endangered species, sustainability, and food plants. Together, we can protect the environment and create lasting change in our communities!

April (continued)

Post conference and its time to get back on the road and head out to spend time with more of our clubs and members. First up Tenterfield which is a favourite – who remembers the fun we had at District Conference in Tenterfield in March 2022?

With school holiday, Easter and ANZAC in April this year, it has been a busy time. Scenic Rim Rotaract held their 4th Annual Easter EggStravaganza — and what an egg-cellent day it was by all accounts! A day of fun, games, community spirit, smiles, laughter, and creativity from families across the Scenic Rim.

ANZAC day is a very special day and one where so many of our clubs and members participate and support local events. I wanted to mention two events in particular, as this year Gareth and I attended both and were humbled to see how strong the community connection is with the events both clubs create.

- Rotary Club of Hope Island, Qld

Dawn Service and despite a thunderstorm overhead and the relentless rain, over 800 locals braved the weather and gathered for a 4.55am start. The turnout of community was inspiring. As the rain poured, so too did the emotion, with a moving and inspiring service that reminded us of the immense sacrifice our servicemen and women made. The wet weather we endured that morning is small in respect of what our ANZACs endured.

Thank you, Hope Island, as well for the dedication of your Peace Pole which stands close to the Armistice Memorial in Reflection Lake, Sanctuary Cove.

- Rotary Club of Coomera Valley, Qld

This ANZAC Day, the community gathered to pay their respects at the newly relocated Upper Coomera 1918 War Memorial. The memorial was carefully moved from the busy intersection at Tamborine–Oxenford Road and Charlies Crossing Road North to Tallowood Park, Upper Coomera.

The club members did an amazing job working closely with many stakeholders delivered the new concrete pavement and cenotaph slab, matching the park's existing pavement and exposed aggregate finish. The new location provides a safe, accessible space for the community to honour those who served and sacrificed — not just on ANZAC Day, but throughout the year.

Grateful that the rain held off until the end of the service.

Gareth's DG Partner Project - "Our Youth. Our Foundation."

MUNA

MUNA, or Model United Nations Assembly, is on this weekend (3 May) at the Tweed Civic Centre. MUNA is aimed at Year 11 and 12 students who compete in teams of 3 representing their chosen nation in discussing, amending, and voting on resolutions similar those that would be debated at the UN. Check out the [MUNA page](#) on the District website for details. A big thank you to the clubs that have sponsored teams to attend and we look forward to a fantastic discussion on the day. In the next update we will report back on the day and the winners – the winning team will go on to represent the District at the National MUNA later this year.

RYPEN

RYPEN, which runs from 13-15 June, is currently seeking applications from students in Years 8-10 and / or aged 14-16. RYPEN is one of our leadership & development opportunities - more details on the [RYPEN page](#) on the District website. I highly encourage clubs to share this information with their local community contacts such as schools, sporting and other groups (e.g. Scouts) that have young people in the right demographic.

We also have students who may apply without an agreed sponsor club so it would be great if you could reach out to the RYPEN Chair (Jacqui Wark – rypen@rotary9640.org) if you are keen on sponsoring a student. Jacqui may also reach out to clubs directly requesting sponsorship – so, if asked, please consider supporting this fantastic program that starts many young people on their Rotary journey!

RYE

It has been 50 years since Rotary Youth Exchange became an official program of Rotary International. This program connects cultures, inspires service, and creates friendships that last a lifetime.

RYE 2026 Long Term Exchange program applications for 2026 are now closed. We have had a great response and interviews with those that applied are scheduled to start at the end of May and the RYE team will be reaching out to clubs looking for support for successful candidates. More information on the program can be found on the [District 9640 RYE website](#), including details of what is expected of host clubs. I would highly encourage clubs to experience the benefits of participation in Youth Exchange by sponsoring students. For those at the recent District Conference you would have heard the powerful impact the program has on participants, clubs and host families.

Rotary Foundation

A big thank you to those clubs and members that have contributed to the Foundation so far this year. For the year to 30 April 2025, across our District, contributions to the Annual Fund, Polio Plus and Other Funds from clubs totalled **~USD 88k** (up around USD 6k on the same time last year). In terms of Annual Fund giving, the top 3 per capita clubs are currently Ashmore, Broadwater-Southport & Coomera River. For the nearly half of our clubs yet to make any contributions, either directly or via club members, as mentioned in the recent special Rotary Foundation update, with the AUD-USD exchange rate not doing us any favours, now may be the time to make those contributions and make an impact!

Your District 9640 Conference (28 - 30 March 2025) "Together We Inspire"

In planning ahead for our Conference theme this year, the word **Inspire** kept rising to the surface. Once again rain featured as part of our event, but it did not stop us showcasing the Magic of Rotary. Check out photos and highlights on the [Conference page](#) on our District Website.

I was delighted to host Rotary International Director Elect (RIDE) PDG Jennifer Scott and PDG Ian Scott as our RI President Stephanie Urchich representative. Thank you PDG Darrell Brown for being their aide during their visit.

Friday, we kicked off by showing the power of collaboration between Rotary District 9640, Rotary e Club NextGen and the Griffith University Gold Coast Campus. A Peace Pole is now located in the garden at the Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics at the University where Rotary Foundation scholars attend. An Incredible peace building initiative, providing equity and better health outcomes to those in malaria prone areas. For those attending, there was a quick tour of the lab and the opportunity to look through the microscope. Thank you Marion Jones and PDG Sandra Doumany for making this dream become a reality. Thank you PDG Ross Smith for being our MC for this event.

After lunch a small group of us then visited the Rotary Club of Surfers Sunrise Wheelchair "Factory". This project started 28 years ago and to date has manufactured over 11,000 wheelchairs. It was a wonderful insight into how bikes, chairs, and other components can be recycled, and how bicycles are refurbished to sell to reinvest funds back into the manufacture of wheelchairs.

To finish the day we officially kicked off the District 9640 Rotary Conference at Southport Sharks Event Centre with a cocktail welcome reception. With our theme of storytelling this year, one of the most moving moments of the night was listening to Col Lee OAM, share excerpts from his book "Turning the Tide". This book shares the incredible work he, fellow Rotarians and community members did to help rebuild, rescue, and support those affected by the Ballina 2022 floods.

Saturday highlights

- Saint Stephens College drumline leading the official party and our RYE team flag bearers.
- Youth Panel - Youth Chair, Gareth Hunt and RYE Chair, Kath Koch
- Keynote Speaker Peter Gash, Lady Elliot Island
- Melanie Lewis, End Plastic Soup
- Masquerade Gala

Sunday highlights

- Finally, some sunshine and our End Polio morning walk to the Peace Pole (and back).
- Showcasing collaboration - Cole (Kick for Kids Foundation), Kat (Make Ways Foundation) and Sarah (Sierra Learners Inc). Collaboration panel moderator PDG Tim Keeler.
- Nat Cook OAM OLYamazing!!!

House of Friendship was also the place to be. So much energy, connection and fun to be had. Many of our displays were linked to our speakers as you will see below.

- Lady Elliot Island (Keynote Speaker: Peter Gash)
- End Plastic Soup (Speaker: Melanie Lewis)
- Australian Rotary Health (ARH) (Speaker: Prof Lara Farrell)
- Malaria Vaccine Project (Speaker: Prof Michael Good)
- Human Brain District Project (Interview with PDG Graham Jones and Chiemeka Chinaka, PhD Candidate, Queensland Brain Institute)
- Kick for Kids Foundation (Speaker: Cole Suter)
- Make Ways Foundation (Speaker: Kat Cacavas)
- Shelter Box (Speaker: Mike Greenslade)
- Projects from our Rotary Community Groups (RCGs)
 - Rotary Falls Prevention Project (Speaker: David Barnes).
 - School Mates (RC Goonellabah project) (Speaker: John Walters)
 - RC Ballina-on Richmond- Flood Recovery (speaker: Col Lee) and Say Not to Domestic and Family Violence (SNTDFV)
 - Northern Gold Coast Rotaract (NCGR) - SNTDFV shirts
 - RC Boonah showcasing new projects that are increasing impact in their community.
 - RC Surfers Paradise Wheelchair project (Contact: Geoff Croad)
 - Towards Respectful Relationships (RC Kingscliff project)
 - Kidds for Kids (RC Hope Island project)
 - Christmas Presents for Kids in Care (Jane Padden, RC Coomera Valley)
- Rotary Foundation (thank you to District Foundation Chair Tony Heading and District Grants Chair Neil Jones for being available to talk to members.)
- Rotary Down Under (RDU) pop up shop. (RC Coomera River)
- Youth programs. Thank you to all the Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) team who joined us all weekend.
- Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children (ROMAC) (Contact: Mike Hetherington)
- Rotary South Pacific Conference 2025 (thank you Ros Teirney for travelling from Tasmania to join us)

No event occurs without the efforts of many people in the lead up and on the day.

Thank you:

- Conference Chair Warren Edwards
- Volunteers from Parkwood Rotary, Coomera Valley, and Banora Tweed.
- Coomera River members and friends for running the RDU pop up shop and raffle sales. Special mention to Jean Shaw and Sarah Jordan.
- All our RYE team. You made the event truly international.
- Our amazing MC - Jacqueline Wark
- Stage Managers – Nick Spanner and Taleaha Dempsey
- Photography – Carey Cam
- Video/photography – Sarah Hunt
- Tech guru, marketing and all-rounder – Gareth Hunt
- To the amazing Conference and District Secretary, Janette Glynn. Two conferences working together (2021 and 2025) and both a dream with you on the team.
- To the entire team at Southport Sharks team who were there with us from the charter of the Broadwater North club on the Wednesday evening through until we bumped out on the Sunday afternoon.



Meet our Rotary Community Leaders

To continue increasing collaboration and connection, you will be aware that starting from July 2024 we are trying something different by having Rotary Community Groups and our Rotary Community Leaders (RCLs), replacing the different club clusters and Assistant Governor (AG) we have been used to. With new clubs coming on board during the year, we have made a few changes to our groups with the main one being our new Group 6 which brings together our most western Qld/NSW clubs.

RCG	Clubs	Rotary Community Leader
Group 1 (NSW)	Alstonville, Alstonville-Plateau Satellite, Ballina-on-Richmond, Ballina-on-Richmond, Ballina Lifestyle Satellite, Byron Bay, Casino, Evans Head, Grafton, Grafton Midday, Iluka-Woombah, Maclean, Mullumbimby, Upper Richmond, Yamba	Robert Blanchard (RC Grafton Midday)
Group 2 (Qld)	Beaudesert, Boonah, Fassifern Valley, SEQ Wildlife Rescue, Jimboomba, Scenic Rim Rotaract, Scenic Rim Sunrise	Andrew Lowry (RC Jimboomba)
Group 3 (Qld)	Burleigh Heads, Broadwater North, Gold Coast, Gold Coast Corporate, Gold Coast Passport, Mermaid Beach, Mermaid Beach-Young Mermaid Satellite, Surfers Paradise, Surfers Sunrise	Anthony Zirilli (RC Burleigh Heads)
Group 4 (Qld)	Ashmore, Broadbeach, Broadwater Southport, Coomera River, Coomera Valley, E-Club Next Gen, Hope Island, Mudgeraba, Nerang, Northern Gold Coast Rotaract, Parkwood, Southern Star Rotex	Rob Brown (RC Hope Island)
Group 5 (NSW/QLD)	Banora Tweed, Currumbin-Coolangatta-Tweed (Qld), Goonellabah, Kingscliff, Kyogle, Lismore, Lismore Networking, Lismore West, Mt. Warning AM, Murwillumbah, Murwillumbah Central, Summerland Sunrise	Gae Ferris (RC Lismore Networking)
Group 6 (Qld/NSW)	Allora, Goondiwindi, Stanthorpe, Stanthorpe-Flexitime Satellite, Tenterfield (NSW), The Granite Belt, Warwick, Warwick Sunrise	Currently searching for our RCL – could it be you?

We are creating a new page on our District Website so you can easily connect with your group and RCL. This will be active early next week.

Planning Ahead

All upcoming events can be found on our [District 9640 website](#). For your diary in May -

- **17 May 2025** - [Northern District Assembly](#) @ Boonah
- **24 May 2025** - [Southern District Assembly](#) @ Casino

Reminder

If you have a key event coming up that you would like to share, please email webmaster@rotary9640.org so it can be added into the calendar on our District Website.

Any Feedback?

Email us at secretary@rotary9640.org with any questions or suggestions