



**SERVE TO
CHANGE LIVES**

Rotary District 9640 Expo

Speaker Bios

Tenterfield NSW - 25 to 27 March 2022

Alex Rubin – Thai Cave Rescue



Alex Rubin is a major in the Australian Army with a background in operational planning, military instruction, humanitarian assistance and diplomatic engagement allied partners. Alex has worked with frontline infantry battalions, military training centres, headquarters roles and on multiple operations.

As a Lieutenant, Alex deployed to the Solomon Islands and East Timor and on exchange with the British Army. As a Captain he deployed to Middle East and Afghanistan as well as Syria as a United Nations

Peacekeeper, during the Arab Spring. For work in Syria, Alex was awarded the United Nations Medal and United Nations Commendation.

In 2009, Alex was selected for specialised foreign linguistics training and spent a year learning the Thai language. Alex is now one of the highest qualified Thai Linguist in Defence and uses these skills to enhance bilateral relations and international engagements. During 2018, Alex was deployed on short notice to the Thailand Cave Rescue mission, as the Australian military contingent commander and lead planner. For his work in this mission, Alex was awarded the Companion of the Order of Direkganabhorn and a royal acknowledgement by the King of Thailand.

Alex and his wife, Wilasinee, have two children Petta (8 years) and Jakkapan (4 years). Alex believes that service to the nation and the community are callings that should never be ignored.

Al Mabin – Australian Rural Lifestyle Photographer



Al Mabin Pty Ltd CEO + Founder / Keynote Presenter/ Agribusiness Leader / Visual Storyteller / 2015 Asia Pacific Female Entrepreneur of the Year/ Traumatic Brain Injury Survivor

Al Mabin Pty Ltd was founded to inspire positive action, reconnect people to the outback way of life and celebrate the essence of the Aussie bush through the power of storytelling. Al's company wraps life-changing messages in riveting stories and spectacular imagery to entertain, educate and inspire.

Al believes in uniting people to the cause - to positively bridge the gap of knowledge and understanding in agriculture and transport; two industries integral to your life.

Passionately driven by storytelling, Al works to artistically highlight the amazing efforts of two industries that are the backbone and grass roots of Australia. Al's group, Al Mabin Pty Ltd do this through a number of avenues; ground and aerial photography and videography, keynote speaking, teaching along with the sales and marketing of two self-published best sellers, 'The Drover' and 'The Driver'. Al choses to self-publish because she wanted to 'own' her products, to be the face of them in all aspects, to ensure their success.

Dr John Parker – A Rocky Road of Service



Dr Parker was born and bred in Liverpool, UK and medically trained at Edinburgh University. He came to Australia to scuba dive the Great Barrier Reef and never returned. He commenced a medical practice in Airlie Beach, Queensland, to follow a passion in diving medicine and later worked at Golden Beach in Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast.

Intermittently he has ventured with the Red Cross and MSF on humanitarian medical missions including 3 war zones, 2 epidemics and several refugee camps. He has since worked as Senior Medical Officer in the refugee detention centres on Nauru, Manus Island and Christmas Island, Medical Officer in an Ebola Treatment Centre in Sierra Leone and spent a year as an Expedition Medical Officer on Davis Station in Antarctica.

Dr Parker was part of the teams that quarantined the crews of the Diamond Princess in Tokyo, Grand Princess in San Francisco and the Ruby Princess in Woollongong. More recently, in Dubai, he helped medically assess the Afghan evacuees from Kabul in transit to Australia. He is presently working on Thursday Island in the Torres Straits. He has written 'The Sports Diving Medical', "Poetic Prescriptions for Feeling Good" and now "From Cholera to Ebola".

Bernie Shakeshaft – BackTrack Youthworks



Bernie didn't quite fit in as a kid. He struggled with his schoolwork and was often caned by his teachers. As an adult, Bernie went to the Northern Territory to become a jackaroo. While working on vast cattle properties, he picked up skills as a tracker from some of his Aboriginal co-workers.

Later, Bernie got into youth work, and today he runs a youth service in Armidale, Northern NSW. At BackTrack Youthworks Bernie welcomes kids who are a bit like his former self. He meets teenagers falling into a life of petty crime, and sometimes incarceration. As soon as they show up, they're given full responsibility for a working dog.

The relationship with a dog is just part of Bernie's program, all of which is designed to draw out tenderness, responsibility and confidence in teenagers who've been struggling with feelings of worthlessness. Since it began in 2006 BackTrack has helped more than 1000 teenagers see a different future.

Professor Ged Williams – Turning Good Managers into Great Leaders: 30 years of learning in 30 minutes



Ged Williams is the Area Director of Nursing and Midwifery for South Metropolitan Health Service, Perth. He has a long history of inspiring and providing strategic leadership for the nursing profession through his many senior roles in diverse clinical settings.

Ged has worked as the most senior nursing officer in major public health services in Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria, and the United Arab Emirates. He has fostered initiatives to promote contemporary knowledge and standards of practice, through leading the establishment of the Australian College of Critical Care Nurses and the World Federation of Critical Care Nurses and was a Director of the World Federation of Societies of Intensive and Critical Care Medicine for eight years; he has used these positions to advocate for and support nursing development, and in particular low-income countries throughout the world. He actively promotes evidence-based approaches to quality improvement, workforce and community capacity building and clinical safety in health care and has contributed numerous research and practice-based publications throughout his career.

Kevin Butler – BlazeAid



Kevin grew up on his parents' farm in Kilmore East and was a primary school teacher for 23 years before going into full-time farming and a transport business in 2000.

After the deadly February 2009 Black Saturday fires swept through their property, burning land and around 3kms of boundary fences, Kevin and his wife, Rhonda, felt the enormity and urgency of the task at hand to ensure stock were safe and not impeding traffic and emergency vehicles on roads. With a band of family, friends and local volunteers, they immediately set

about re-fencing. Rhonda's response to the help they were given was 'now it's our turn to help others' and the couple organised assistance for neighbours in the rebuilding of their fencing too.

As the scale of the catastrophe was revealed, this guiding generosity became a rallying point. Kevin and Rhonda took on the task of seeking volunteers and then coordinating them to assist with the removal and the subsequent rebuilding of burnt-out boundary fences in surrounding affected towns and communities. And so began BlazeAid.

The Butlers made their house and shearing shed home for BlazeAid volunteers and headquarters for the management of the operations. This ensured that materials and equipment could be stored and volunteers fed and accommodated. All communications, planning and publicity were undertaken on the property.

BlazeAid's recovery work has continued, following fires, cyclones, drought and floods in other States, in partnership with local councils and Rotary. Thousands of volunteers have come from all over Australia and overseas on learning of this great compassionate work via worldwide publicity and the BlazeAid website.

The almost 16,500 kilometres of fences cleared and a further 15,500 kilometres re-built by over 35,000 volunteers, do not reflect the humanitarian impact on the local communities. The help and hope that BlazeAid brings to rural families after natural disasters cannot be quantified. Throughout the 13 years of BlazeAid's work, Kevin and Rhonda Butler have worked tirelessly to ensure the integrity of what is done for those affected by crisis. BlazeAid has become a benchmark for rural recovery best practice across Australia.

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