

Welcome to the first District Newsletter for 2019. It is hard to believe another calendar year has begun and we are over half way through our Rotary year. I hope everyone was able to find some time to relax with family and friends and enjoy the warm weather over the holiday period.

The second half of the Rotary year is always a busy time for Rotarians with Rotary Projects and Programmes in full swing. We also welcome back District Governor Elect, Tania Lowery, and Phil from their time at International Assembly in San Diego.

It is with sadness that we record the passing of two Past District Governors, PDG Stan Wilkinson and PDG Geoffrey Hall, since the last District Newsletter. Both were members of the Temuka-Geraldine Club at the time they each served as District Governors. You can read more about Stan and Geoff's valuable contributions to Rotary in this newsletter.

The District Conference will be held on the weekend of the 26th to 28th of April 2019 in the beautiful historic town of Oamaru. Many of you will have seen the Conference video when I visited your Club, but for those who were unable to be at the meeting, or wish to see it again, just click on the following link. www.9980conference.co.nz

The Conference Theme is "Better Together". As Rotarians we can all achieve so much more in our local and global communities if we all work together.

The District Conference is an important part of our Rotary lives, it is an opportunity for all of us to get together, catch up on what other Clubs have been doing, network, listen to some great speakers and just have fun. The Conference is being held in the beautifully restored Oamaru Opera House. The Saturday night "party" is being held in the historic part of Oamaru at the old Loan & Mercantile Building with a theme of "Heritage". I am sure we will see some very interesting "Heritage" themed costumes on the Saturday night.

For those who do not wish to drive, (or walk), on the Saturday night, a free bus service is being provided between most Oamaru motels and hotels on Thames Street and the Loan & Mercantile, so you will be able to relax and enjoy the night.

I encourage you to bring as big a group as possible from your Club along to Oamaru and enjoy a weekend of fellowship. Often the District Conference is the first time many Rotarians get to hear about Rotary activities outside their individual clubs.

The Conference is also the venue for the District Speech contest final. This is always a highlight as we hear from some very talented youth. We are very grateful for the \$2,000 Speech Contest prize money for the final, which has been kindly donated by Dunedin law firm Wilkinson Rodgers.

There are many other Awards and trophies which will be awarded at the Conference and you can read about these in more detail in this Newsletter.

At Christmas, Timaru Club member John Barton retired as District Chair of Information Technology. John has undertaken this role for many years since PDG Trish Boyle served as District Governor. John has helped guide the District through a time of very fast changes in technology and I wish to thank him, on behalf of the District, for all the time and effort he has put into this role. It is very much appreciated by everyone. On a positive note John has said he is happy to continue to help and support Clubs with ClubRunner. Thank you so much John!

Many thanks to the Clubs in the District that supported E-Club of WASH member Biniam Belay. Biniam is an Irrigation Engineer from Ethiopia and was accepted to study for a Master's Degree in the USA. Biniam is very appreciative of the support and below is a photo of Biniam at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut where he has begun his studies.



In December 2018 the NRG Club in Dunedin closed, with some members joining existing Rotary Clubs. It is hoped in the future NRG in Dunedin will be re-established as a satellite club. On a brighter note it was good news to see the successful chartering on the 24th January 2019 of the new Rotary Club of Mount Aspiring. The new Club's Advisor is PDG Janice Hughes and the first Club President is Pip Kidd. We wish the new Club all the very best for the future.

Planning is well under way for the Professional Development Exchange with Tasmania. The outbound team leave Queenstown on the 20th March 2019, and arrive back with the Tasmanian inbound team on the 15th April 2019. Both groups will do presentations at the Oamaru Conference. It will be a fantastic opportunity for everyone involved, including Rotarians in our District who assist with hosting and vocational visits.

In a Rotary International report received recently it was great to see the worldwide Rotary membership has grown by a net 17,309 as at 31st January 2019.

As I read your Club Newsletters it amazes me the projects and activities that Rotarians in our District are involved with. The energy, commitment and goodwill given to local and global communities makes me proud to be a Rotarian. As mentioned in the past, you will get out of Rotary what you put into it. There are so many opportunities to do so!

The first weekend of March will see the President Elect of each Club travel to Auckland for South Pacific President Elect Training, (SPPETS). This is a wonderful opportunity for each Club President Elect to learn more about the wider Rotary world and meet fellow President Elects from Clubs all over New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. I recall attending SPPETS as a President Elect, and really understanding the full significance of Rotary as a global organisation. I wish the President Elects all the best for a wonderful seminar and to make the most of the Rotary contacts you will make.

Barbara and I look forward to seeing you all at the District Conference in Oamaru this April. It will be great for us all to catch up and have some fun! If you have not yet registered you can do so at:

www.9980conference.co.nz

All the best and kind Regards

Andrew H