



# A PRESIDENTIAL YEAR

I was very honoured to be invited to become President of the Rotary Club of Sydney, one of the largest and most prestigious Clubs in the southern hemisphere, and I would like to thank you all for the support and enthusiasm of all members which made it such a special year for me.



To summarise:

## SPEAKERS' PROGRAMME

I must admit that at the beginning of the year I was worried about sourcing good quality speakers for the 12 months, but somehow things just seemed to fall into place, and I am sure that everyone will agree that the programme has been thought-provoking and of interest to most people.

We have had people in public life – Brendan Nelson (then Leader of the Federal Opposition), Senator Kim Carr, Nathan Rees (Premier of NSW), James Lukabyo (High Commissioner for Uganda), Judith Fergin (Consul General of the US) and NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione, Barry O'Farrell (Leader of the Opposition in the NSW Government).

Authors Sue Wyndham, Tania Hayes and Anne Henderson; businessmen Russell Balding (Sydney Airport), David Richmond (Coordinator-General NSW Government) and Glenn Stevens (Governor of the Reserve Bank; economists



Rudi Filapek-Vandyck and Dr Chris Caton; environmentalists Professor Lesley Hughes (climate change), Bruce McArthur (Australian Wildlife Conservation) and Mike Dureau (Engineers for disaster recovery); and medical matters were covered by Joy Gillett (Australian Rotary Health Research Fund), Ian Hickie (Brain & Mind Institute), Allan Meares (Interplast), Charlie Frew (Bowel Cancer Institute), and John Brogden (Lifeline).

To round off the programme we heard from Sarah Garnett from the Footpath Library, Tony Lund – Disability Services NSW, Jessica Brown – Sister to Sister and Kaise Stephan who swam the English Channel to raise funds for Childrens' Cancer Research; our own members Indy Singh and Julian Ledger who spoke respectively on the Indian Economy and the new YHA facility at The Rocks, and last but not least actor John Gaden who gave us a most absorbing insight into Gallipoli.

My thanks to Ann Burleigh, Tony Benner, John Given, Geoff McIntyre, Roslyn McLeod (and her assistant Diana Armstrong) and Robert Mitchell for their assistance during the year.

## FELLOWSHIP

It was agreed that rather than big ticket functions this year we would instead concentrate on fellowship, and under the control of Ann Burleigh we started in July with dinner at Surjit's Indian Restaurant in Angel Place, followed in November by a cocktail party at the Wentworth Art Gallery in O'Connell Street held jointly with the Rotary Club of Kings Cross.

The event was very successful, giving us the opportunity to meet Rotarians from another Club whilst raising sufficient money to fund a Shelterbox and donate over \$2,000 to YoungCare.

We changed from Christmas lunch to dinner and had a wonderful evening with the Sydney Cantorian Choir and Di "Bubbles" Fisher, but probably the best evening of fellowship was held at the Killara Golf Club in February when a group of our members gathered with a large number of past Rotarians for an early Sunday evening dinner. It was heartwarming to see past and present members all together enjoying each others' company.

As Joe Botta was gearing up for our regular Anzac Day BBQ we were requested by our Honorary Member, the Governor Marie Bashir, to assist when she opened up Government House in March for a fundraising day for the Victorian Bushfire Appeal. So out came the aprons and tongs, and we were joined from Rotarians from all over the district. Then on to the real thing in Hyde Park when we provided food for the diggers on Anzac Day.



Thanks to all Rotarians and friends who helped on these two days, and an especially big vote of thanks to Joe for his great organisational skills.



In May Indy's company held the annual Fiducian Golf Day which was well represented by our club members and raised over \$32,000 for YoungCare. Once again Indy we are very grateful for your sponsorship of this event.

We finished off the year with an evening at Anahita Persian Restaurant in Lane Cove in early June.

I hope that you enjoyed these functions, and particularly the opportunity to spend some time getting to know your fellow members.

### COMMITTEES

Our three external committees are always extremely busy, and this was certainly the case this year.

#### Youth – Indy Singh (Director)

We sent representatives to RYLA, RYPEN, MUNA, and the National Youth Science Forum. Our inbound Exchange Student Johanna has completed her 12 month stay in Australia and in March we welcomed back Krystal Smith who had spent the previous 12 months in Austria. The annual "Your City" week, sponsored by Fiducian, was once again a success as was "Your Country". Thank you to Indy and his team for another great year.

#### International – Ian Conley (Director) & David Smith (Chair)

Much of the focus of the international committee has been on sister club relations which have now been organised with Makati, Singapore and Hong Kong. We obtained a matching grant from RI in conjunction with the Hong Kong Club to assist with their Heep Hong project to assist autistic children. With a lot of hard work from Bruce Edwards we also received a matching grant to provide scholarships for disadvantaged children in Suva jointly with the Rotary Club of Suva East.

Unfortunately we weren't so lucky with our application for a matching grant with partners Makati and Singapore to raise finance for a TSPI project near Makati in The Philippines. Our application was not successful as, because of the global financial crisis, Rotary International was unable to award further grants. However we have recently been advised that the grant has now been approved.



We have also reached agreement with ROMAC ("Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children") to join our Adrian Golding Gift of Life project with them. Our role will be to provide the necessary funds to bring a child of our choice to Australia for urgent medical attention, whilst ROMAC will look after administration matters.



#### Service & Awards Committee – James Allen (Director)

I don't really need to tell you what this committee does, as most of their projects are showcased during Tuesday luncheons on a regular basis.

Each year we present the Community Service Award to someone who has given outstanding service to the community. This year we had two excellent candidates

and so decided to present the Community Service Award to Elaine Henry from the Smith Family and the Community Service Innovation Award to Jack Heath from the Inspire Foundation.

The Caltex Rotary Club of Sydney Teachers Award was this year presented to four very worthwhile candidates who will now be able to travel overseas to study the most up to date methods in their particular specialty, and we heard from previous winners who told us how the award had enhanced their careers.

Presentation of the Mt Eliza Scholarship, Bill Neill's Ethics Hypothetical, Consular Day, the Citizenship Ceremony and Soukup Scholarship Presentations are all annual events of which the Club, and the Vocational Service Committee in particular, can be justly proud.



And for the final function of my year, the MS 24 Hour Swimathon was held at Olympic Park on 4 & 5 July. We not only helped with the organisation of the event but also fielded a team which swam 75ks and raised over \$26,000.

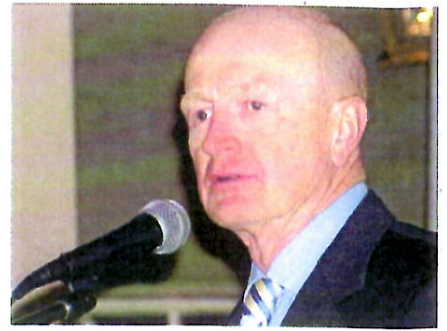
### PR COMMITTEE

Tony Benner and his team has done an outstanding job this year, producing a most informative weekly newsletter, helping everyone to get familiar with using Clubrunner, and getting our name in front of a lot of people through web pages. And of course the somewhat controversial Rotary Means Business sessions which are catching on all around the country. Congratulations to Tony and his team of .....? and Tony!

## MEMBERSHIP

It has not been a happy year as far as membership goes. We have lost Harry Fox, PP Gerry Rihs, Goroslav Keller, Ron Hill, Ian Hamilton, John Koch, Mike Hodgetts, Daniel Chen and, of course, Doug Markell in very sad circumstances.

On the other hand we have welcomed Skendar Bregu, Sue Canessa, Sanan Thamo, Owen Judge, Mark Dyer and Phillip Maxwell, all of whom I am sure will be very active members of the Club for some time to come. This will leave us with around 135 members at the end of the year, so we really need to try to attract more new members or we will lose our title of the largest club in Sydney to the Coves. Thank you to John Given for taking on the role as membership director after the resignation of Harry Fox.



## DISTRICT

We have been very active in district affairs this year, with a large contingent from our Club attending the District Conference in September. It is a wonderful way to meet other Rotarians and to learn about what clubs worldwide are doing, and I would ask all Rotarians, and particularly newer members, to consider attending. This year the conference will again be held in Sydney and so it is convenient for members to attend at least some of the sessions. Garry Browne, Harry Fox, Michael Dunn, Ray Patteson, Rolf Prince, John Rawson and Brett Freer have all participated in District administration during the year, while I attended Presidents meetings and John Given Presidents -Elect meetings. We also home hosted and entertained Ambassadorial Scholars and members of GSE teams.

To all the other Directors I have not as yet mentioned:

Hon Treasurer Craig Douglas and Hon Secretary Jean Elborn who have made sure we comply with the myriad government regulations, and also those required by RI.

Past President Garry Browne who has always been there for me when I have needed his guidance.

My two vice presidents – Taine Moufarrige who has been our contact with Youngcare and Geoff Wilbow – always ready to step in when needed. Thanks Geoff for taking over when I was away.

Our archivists Don Knudsen and Ken Sutherland and Hon. Legal Adviser Ned Boyce.

And of course those wonderful Rotarians without whom the Tuesday lunch would not function as smoothly – Chereilyn Suzuki, Ron Dunk, Dave McLeish, Don Knudsen and many more who regularly give their time to assist with registration matters. And my President's Aide, PP John Randall, who is always at the front door to take over if I am called away. Thanks also to Sonia who has been assisting this year.

And to our team of Claytons Sergeants who have managed to take our hard earned money from us each week - Ann Burleigh, Karen Loblay, Robert Mitchell, Bert Rosenberg, Geoff Wilbow and, for a short while, Rod Rate, ably led by Peter Townsend. And finally to Warren Lewis and the staff of the Castlereagh Hotel. I am sure that everyone appreciates the quality of the food and the courteous and efficient manner in which it is served to us.



Our main project this year has been Youngcare - a charity devoted to providing high level care for young adults who would otherwise have to live in traditional aged care facilities. These people, ranging in age from 20 to 50, are physically incapacitated through accident or illness, such as Multiple Sclerosis, requiring a level of care that cannot be provided in the home.



The official opening of the first Youngcare Apartment, took place in Brisbane December 2007. There are now 16 young people resident, giving them a more relevant, dignified and spirited way of life, and also giving others in the same situation hope for the future.

Our role has been to help bring Youngcare to Sydney, and as well as fundraising we have been assisting with the selection of an appropriate location and helping with various permits from council and government instrumentalities. I am pleased to confirm that we have raised our target of \$200,000 which will be used to fund Youngcare in Sydney.

I would like to once again thank you all for honouring me with this role, and I hope that you have all found the year as interesting and rewarding as I have.

My best wishes go to John Given for his presidential year.

**Patricia Harrison, President, The Rotary Club of Sydney, 2008-2009.**

