



From the President Alick Osborne

During the week I read an article about Sylvia Whitlock, the first female President of a Rotary Club. Silvia was President of the Rotary Club of Duarte in California in 1987. You can read her story on the last page of this CC.

We have proof that things have changed substantially since then in the Stonnington Cluster, and across Rotary around much of the world! While our club boasts an even balance of male and female members, that is not the case everywhere – I know there is more to be done ladies!

I was very pleased with the attendance at the Cluster Meeting on Wednesday evening – around 70 people with all four clubs well represented.

Kelly O'Dwyer gave an interesting address covering her Ministerial responsibilities. She was generous in her responses to everyone's questions.

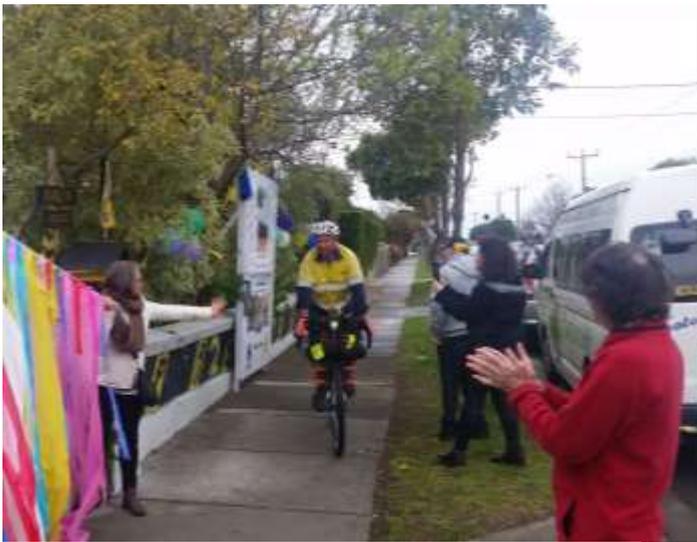
I have written to Kelly to thank her on behalf of RCEM.

We are fortunate to have more good speakers lined up during September.

Tim Taylor will be with us on the **12th September** to speak about his 11,000 kilometre bicycle ride raising money for the homeless under the "Lone Ride for the Homeless" banner.

Tim will be joined by the indefatigable **Debbie Holmes from Avalon Centre in Malvern East** who plans to use the money that Tim has raised to buy a house for homeless people. Debbie has studied different models and believes that the strategies used in Finland to get people into secure accommodation where the issues that contribute to their homelessness can be properly treated is the way forward. Debbie dreams of not just one house – but many.

The following week **19th September** we have **DG Bronwyn Stephens** visiting us.



Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th October

Mucklefest – an opportunity for Members to get out of town and help with a few stalls that Hein & Veronica set up to raise money for the local CFA. You might get to drive one of Hein’s fantastic vehicles!



Avalon
MEETING UNMET NEEDS

Upcoming Events / Dates for the Diary

We have some important dates coming up and I would ask Members to try to be available to assist in any way you can.

Saturday 20th October

MVPS Carnival - RCEM will be providing a BBQ – 50% Of the money we raise will go to the school and the balance to our fundraising.



Sunday 28th October

French Car Festival – Markham Reserve Ashburton. We have been asked to provide a BBQ. 100% of the earnings to RCEM.

Saturday 10th November

Upcoming Events



Another big market day is planned with a full dance card of stalls and hopefully good weather to bring many people through before Christmas.

Saturday 8th and 15th December

It’s beginning to feel a lot like Christmas... and that means we will have trees to deliver. Lots of them!

Please make a note of these dates in your diary and try to be available to assist. We will have chairs at BBQ’s for weary legs. Hein has both manual and automatic vehicles and if you are younger than the car – you can drive it! We need navigators and scribes and coffee gophers to help with the trees – it’s not just about the muscle you know !



Busy Feet Preparing for Hobart

On Saturday, our BusyFeet children and volunteers joined with those from Melton and Hillside to meet each other and practice the dances to perform at the Opening Ceremony of the Rotary Zone Institute conference in Hobart on this Friday (14/9).

The 15 BusyFeet children are so excited, some have never been on a plane before, so we wish them well for a happy and enjoyable time in Hobart. There are over 60 BusyFeet travelers (children, parents, dance teachers, volunteers), all assisted by the great support of Rotary.



See the report from Rotary Conference following – well done to the Busy Feet Team !



A number of caffiene addicted (?) members got together on Saturday morning at Woodfired near Glen Iris station to discuss all things Rotary – and much more. Smiling faces all round 😊

The mouse that roared: the fight for women in Rotary

Guest speaker at the 2018 Rotary International pre-Convention Peace Conference, Sylvia Whitlock, made history when she became Rotary's first female club president in 1987. This is her story, and the story of the tiny Californian club that changed the face of service clubs around the world.

Sylvia's position as principal at a school first led her to Rotary. She took up the job after completing college in New York City and working for the United Nations for 10 years. She then fell in love with California, where she completed further studies and a doctorate. While working as an elementary school principal in Duarte, California, Sylvia was invited to join the history-making Rotary Club of Duarte.

The club had checked that the district governor thought it was acceptable to invite women to their club. He replied, "Sure, but don't tell anyone!" Female members were listed in club records by their initial, so no one at head office would know their gender. "Joining the Rotary club for me was everything I needed to do to be a member of that community," said Sylvia. "It really introduced me to humanitarian service, to serving other people, and it made the world a much smaller place, easier to navigate – and brought a lot of joy and a lot of experience."

Following a club event attended by officials from Rotary International, it was discovered the women present were designated members. After they returned to Evanston, the club received notification they could either ask the women to

leave or stop calling themselves a Rotary club. “The male Rotarians, who knew how important the women were to the club, said, ‘We want the women to stay’. They tried to appeal the case to their board of directors – but they only listened to Rotary clubs, and if you had women you weren’t a real Rotary club,” Sylvia said.

In March 1978, Rotary International revoked the charter of the Duarte club and terminated its membership in Rotary International. In response, the club members decided to just put a big “X” over their sign, and from then on it was known as the Ex-Rotary Club of Duarte. Yet they continued to operate as usual, creating thanksgiving baskets for the needy and working with an orphanage in Mexico, among other projects.

At the Presidents-Elect Training Seminar in 1982, after the California Appellate Court ruled in their favour, Sylvia and a group of Rotarians were discussing the case. The district governor at the time said, “This is going to be over when Rotary appeals. This is just a case of the mouse that roared.”

“We already had a banner that said X Rotary Club of Duarte – so we then added to the bottom, ‘The Mouse That Roared,’” Sylvia said. Meanwhile, the president of the nearby Rotary Club of Arcadia, Sanford Smith, said he thought the decision could be challenged in the Californian courts, leading the Rotary Club of Duarte to file suit. Rotary International’s first response was to petition the suit not be heard, on the basis that not all Rotarians were Californians. However, the court ruled it would be heard at the California Superior Court – but in the end decided Rotary International was right: they didn’t have to have female members.

However, the Ex-Rotary Club of Duarte wasn’t done yet. They received advice they needed to approach it not as a membership issue, but instead as a civil rights issue. California law includes the Unruh Act, which prevents discrimination in public accommodation. Rotary clubs were covered by this act, as they accommodated people for fellowship and business interests – at the time, around 80 per cent of all memberships were paid for by employers. By limiting participation in Rotary, it could be reasonably argued women were locked out of

service and professional opportunities. Assisted by the American Civil Liberties Union, they appealed on these grounds.

The result came back: Rotary clubs could not discriminate against women joining Rotary and would have to accept female members. “Rotary, every step of the way, said, No, we’re not going to accept women members. So, they appealed to the California Supreme Court,” Sylvia said. “But they wouldn’t hear the case, saying they were satisfied with the findings, so Rotary International appealed the United States Supreme Court.”

However, the United States Supreme Court supported the previous decision, ruling on May 4, 1987 that Rotary had to accept women – and so did all other service clubs – leading to widespread changes across the country, which later changed standards across the world.

Sylvia made history by becoming the world’s first Rotary club president that same year. “I was no longer S. Whitlock. I was Sylvia Whitlock. Now women everywhere could go right in. When the Rotary Constitution was first written, it was written for ‘People of integrity’. It morphed to ‘Men of integrity’. Now it’s back to ‘Persons of integrity’.”

Sylvia arrived at work the day the decision was announced to find press from across the nation converged on the school grounds. The Rotary Club of Duarte was forced to find a new location for their next meeting in order to accommodate the enormous number of people and media who wished to attend. “We had some interesting telephone calls, including one person who asked if the food would be any better now women were in Rotary. I replied, ‘Well, we’re not cooking!’ Some were decidedly less pleasant.”

Yet despite the progress made, over three decades later, Rotary still faces challenges integrating women fully into Rotary. Women constitute 22 per cent of Rotarians worldwide, with these figures somewhat higher in Western nations with greater gender equality. Australia has 27 per cent female members and New Zealand has 25 per cent.

Sylvia believes Rotary needs to keep working until this figure is better.

“We’re a reflection of the larger community. When we talk about diversity in Rotary, this includes having males and females, as well as representatives from all ethnic and age groups. “Rotary International has put out a statement saying a club that represents its community in diversity, in gender, in ethnicity and in culture, is a club that will be successful in the world. So, Rotary is trying to encourage that kind of look at what clubs are doing.” Sylvia recalls that not that long ago, there was a club in New Jersey that, at the time, still didn’t have any women members, and Rotary was threatening to take its charter. At the time they said they couldn’t find capable women – Sylvia and her colleagues were thinking of transferring their membership there to see what they would say!

She believes, on the whole, unconscious bias is likely responsible for holding back recruitment of women members, rather than intentional discrimination.

“When thinking of inviting someone capable to join Rotary, some may not think it might be a woman. Yet women do the same kinds of work men do today... I think it’s about being aware. It’s about getting men to stop and look around to see if there are women they can invite capable of doing the work required to be a good Rotarian.”

Sylvia says acceptance of history and taking the time to acknowledge and correct the mistakes of the past is vital to moving forward. She described her recent trips as a guest of three Rotary clubs in Texas, Mississippi and North Carolina in America’s South: “For me, it was fascinating to see the diversity in clubs in the heart of Dixie. Actually, those clubs were more diverse than any clubs I have seen in California. “The news that grabs our attention today has a lot to do with what is largely a denial of the diverse people we are. People are still being segmented by race, colour, creed, ethnic origin, religious persuasion and sexual orientation. As Rotarians, with a worldwide presence, we are conveniently situated to affect change and we can do it through conscious inclusion,” Sylvia said.

“I’ve learned over the years that my community is not just the residential community in which I live, or the town that governs it, or the state that supports it. We are citizens of the world, where every action, however remote or seemingly far removed, has a ripple effect on us – to the extent that if others are well, we are well. I believe it is Rotary’s responsibility to be an example of change. It begins with all of us looking around for opportunities to be more inclusive. All together it builds to something. Enough drops of water and they build to a flood.”

From Rotary Down Under Facebook post 3rd September.

https://www.facebook.com/rotarydownunder/posts/2907268265982241?_tn_ =K-R



Meeting Roster

This week: **12th September**

Welcome – Caroline & Bernard
Sergeant – Mark
Chair – Lyle

Next week: **19th September**

Welcome – Trevor & Archna
Sergeant – Hein
Chair – Alick

Bunnings BBQ Dates:
22 September
27 October
17 November

2018 Australia New Zealand Rotary Conference
14-16 September 2018 HOTEL GRAND CHANCELLOR, 1 Davey Street, Hobart, Tasmania



Explore
THE Possibilities
Rotary



Register now at www.rotaryinstitute.org.au CONVENOR: Noel Trevaskis, RI Director 2016/18

2018 Australia New Zealand Rotary Conference Newsletter Issue 8, September 2018



It's Conference time, and Hobart is waiting to welcome you!

The Australia New Zealand Rotary Conference in Hobart is now only a matter of weeks away and the excitement is building with such a great line-up of guest speakers, breakout sessions, reunions, entertainment and events!

I'm delighted to say that the opening session promises to be a real eye-opener with a very special performance of dance by a group called BusyFeet. Why is BusyFeet special? The group consists of young people with intellectual and physical disabilities and is a project of several Melbourne Rotary Clubs. BusyFeet is an excellent program that gives the children and their parents so much fun, not to mention the Rotarians who are actively involved in it! I have no doubt that you will enjoy their performance, as well as hearing more about this inspirational project. The children and families have been preparing for this special performance for the last eighteen months.

BusyFeet along with other presentations at the Conference will leave lasting memories for all those attending. I ask all Rotary leaders to encourage as many Rotarians as possible to come to Hobart so they can hear of the good work that Rotary is doing in Australia and internationally. This represents a wonderful opportunity for them to hear, and meet, immediate Past RI President Ian Riseley, Rotary Foundation Trustee Mary Beth Growney Selene along with our Rotary Zone Director Raffy Garcia.

I look forward to welcoming you in Hobart to *Explore the Possibilities!*



Noel Trevaskis, Convenor

