

CHAPTER THREE

SERVING SENIORS

ROTARY'S interest in the needs of the aged seems to have begun rather later than concerns with other members of the community, possibly because Australia had introduced non-contributory age pensions in the first decade of the 20th Century and the need for further financial support was not apparent. Moreover, as seen in the last chapter, the early preoccupation clearly was with the needs of youth.

The next major community problem, as seen by the Rotarians of the time, was the disruption caused by the great depression of the 1930s, from which Australia did not fully recover until war brought prosperity to accompany its tragedy.

Throughout the period of the depression and the war, little thought seems to have been given to the needs of the aged; if, indeed, it occurred to anyone that the aged might have any needs beyond those that were met by the financial support provided by government and the personal support provided by families. And here was another reason for any needs of aged people remaining invisible: the economic and social benefits of the extended family, with one or possibly two live-in grandparents or even, perhaps, another unattached female relation such as a spinster or widowed aunt, whose admittedly slender pension still supplemented the family income and whose contribution to household chores was invaluable.

It is not surprising, then, that reports of any significant projects for the aged in the years before World War II do not appear in any of the available records or journals of the period.

It is not suggested that the elderly were completely forgotten. There were outings and entertainments for the residents of homes and hostels; and the Rotary Club of Melbourne, in 1941-42 when the major concerns were with war work, arranged visits and entertainment for the Salvation Army Old Men's Home and the Cheltenham Aged and Infirm Hospital.

The earliest major projects of Rotary clubs to assist aged people were concerned with the provision of meals-on-wheels. By the early

1950s, several clubs in the Sydney metropolitan area had initiated meals-on-wheels services for elderly people living alone, or had supported other community organisations in providing such services.

By this time, post-war full employment, the acceptance of the "nuclear" family as the normal and most desirable family unit, the recruitment of spinster sisters or aunts into the workforce, rapid inflation that reduced the value of the old-age pension (later to be re-named the Age Pension) which always lagged behind the periodical cost-of-living adjustments, the higher cost of housing and steadily increasing longevity, had wrought changes in society for which few were prepared and to which older people found it difficult to adjust. Many elderly people were now living alone on inadequate incomes. Unable to economise on rent, power, heating and statutory charges, they often managed to do so on food, leading to serious malnutrition. Others, who were financially better off, were often under-nourished because they just couldn't be bothered to cook adequate meals for themselves. Meals-on-wheels was a means of providing one proper meal a day; at a modest price for those who could afford it and free of charge for those who could not.

The need for meals-on-wheels services in the various communities was identified in a variety of ways. In the City of Sydney, Rotary help was sought by the City Council; in some areas the "caretaker" groups brought the need to Rotary attention.

The ways in which Rotary assisted also varied. In some areas the service was a Rotary initiative, in others the clubs provided either the organisation, the initial funds or the workforce.

Having discovered that there were now specific needs of aged people, Rotary clubs began to investigate further, resulting in a large number of projects.

In 1950 the Rotary Club of Melbourne initiated a project to study the needs of the aged and in 1951 arranged for British authority on the aged Dr. Bertram Hutchinson to come to Victoria, make a survey and publish a report. In the following year the club underwrote the cost of printing the report, undertaken by the University of Melbourne. The report resulted in the formation of the

Old People's Welfare Council of Victoria.

In 1955 the Rotary Club of Sydney appointed a committee to survey the needs of the aged, with the help and advice of the Sydney University Department of Social Studies. The committee reported that "steps should be taken to lessen the loneliness of the aged and infirm in the community". A club forum was held at which the needs of the aged were discussed. It was claimed that, in Victoria, 30,000 old people had been found to be oppressed by loneliness while in New South Wales 30% of suicides were old people.

1956 Sydney Rotarian Andrew Ungar visited Melbourne and attended a three-day conference of the Old People's Welfare Council, as a result of which, armed with the results of the survey and information provided by Melbourne club, Sydney club decided that an Old People's Welfare Council in New South Wales should be formed as a matter of urgency.

It was fortunate indeed that Griff Mackay, formerly of the Rotary Club of Melbourne where he had been the principal promoter of the old people's welfare project, had moved to Sydney and had become a Sydney club member. His experience and enthusiasm were invaluable at that time.

With the co-operation of the Sydney City Council, the New South Wales Council of Social Service and the State Government, the Old People's Welfare Council was established by the Rotary Club of Sydney with an initial grant of £10,000 to cover the first two years of expenditure. By 1958 Old People's Welfare Associations had been established in many centres, mostly with Rotary support.

All States in Australia soon had their Old People's Welfare Councils and in 1965 a National Council on the Ageing was established with Federal Government funding to co-ordinate the work of the Old People's Welfare Councils and provide funds. In 1972 the State bodies were re-named "Councils on the Ageing" as State branches of the National Council.

Operating now without formal Rotary involvement, the Council on the Ageing is the major specialist organisation identifying needs of the aged for both voluntary and statutory agencies and maintaining liaison with governments.

Many individual club projects, both large and small, for the aged have been recorded since the 1950s.

In 1957 the Rotary Club of Sydney began its Christmas Luncheons for senior citizens which were part of the club calendar for 16 years. Pensioners were brought to the lunch in buses, each was personally looked after by a Rotarian during the lunch and entertainment and each went home with a small gift. When the lunches were discontinued, the old folk were not forgotten. Club members personally delivered hampers to pensioners before Christmas.

In Ashfield, New South Wales, in 1957 the Rotary club established a senior citizens' community centre to be administered by the Municipal Council; while in Hawthorn, Victoria, the Over Sixty Club was established by local Rotarians and handed over to the Mayor, who formed a permanent committee to continue the operation.

The Rotary Club of Warragul, Victoria, began its service in 1938 and its annual reports testify to the value of its efforts; but it was 1958 before any mention of service to the aged appears – a trip for elderly citizens to Burnham Beeches, with no elaboration; while Belgrave, also in Victoria, chartered in 1954, after a commendable number of important community projects, recorded its first modest activity for senior citizens, a picnic, after only ten years of service.

Many clubs discovered the need for nursing home care, sponsoring a unit in a hostel-care facility or a bed in a geriatric hospital or home, purchase of small buses for the transport of aged people from their institutions to shops or on outings and endowing research into aspects of geriatric medicine.

The Rotary Club of Marrickville, New South Wales, received the Paul Harris Award from R.I. in 1965-66 for establishing an occupational therapy centre for elderly people which met a genuine community need. An occupational therapist was engaged by the local Council to teach handicrafts and other group activities.

There was an unusual background to the "Golden Years Club" built in Glenorchy, Tasmania. The wives of Rotarians had formed an auxiliary which they named "Mini-Wheel" (as distinct from Inner

Wheel) the members of which, in 1966, did their own survey of the needs of aged people and reached their own conclusions: that companionship, encouragement to remain ambulant and a daily hot meal were of the greatest importance. The Rotary club, responding to the needs identified, launched an appeal to build a club incorporating kitchen, dining room, craft rooms, games rooms and an auditorium. The total project, at that time, cost £20,000 (\$40,000), including a 25% government subsidy.

The Rotary Clubs of Ararat, Camperdown and Cobden in Victoria were responsible for housing programs for elderly people in their respective towns. These projects varied from Ararat's retirement village with cottages and hostel accommodation, to low-rental flats provided for elderly women in Camperdown. All these facilities were developed as a result of Rotary club surveys which identified needs in their communities.

An extensive Rotary project in Sale, Victoria, which took 12 years to complete, began in 1969. It consisted of 52 self-contained housing units and a further 60 hostel units in a retirement village, with dining room, lounges, sunroom, craft and recreation rooms all set in garden surroundings.

A Rotary Aged Care Appeal, completed in 1970 by the Rotary Club of Adelaide, yielded \$80,000 which, with a two-to-one government subsidy, provided \$240,000 for a building to accommodate frail aged people in hostel units at the Helping Hands Homes for the Aged in North Adelaide.

Also in 1970 the Rotary Club of Launceston published a booklet containing information for the elderly – available services, health care, housing, eligibility for pensions and anything else that might concern people in or approaching the "senior" age group. The club also embarked on an ambitious campaign to provide a geriatric hospital on land made available by the Port of Launceston Authority near George Town some 50 kilometres from Launceston. Probably many Rotarians living in the Launceston area to-day are unaware that, 25 years ago, the well-known Ainslie House was a Rotary project.

Another Tasmanian club that identified needs of the elderly is Sandy Bay, which formed the Sandy Bay Senior Citizens' Club in

1972 and followed up its interest a decade later by providing a \$300,000 building, with a Government subsidy, on land provided by the Council.

Probably the most ambitious single club project was the provision, in 1974, of a day care centre at an established home for the aged by the Melbourne club, with the subsequent participation in the project of the Melbourne South, Port Melbourne, St. Kilda and Prahran clubs. These clubs provided \$171,000 from their own resources without any appeal to the public. As well, Rotarians provided goods and services valued conservatively at \$25,000 for the construction. As a result of their involvement in this project, the need for renovation of some of the older buildings at the home became apparent; so further funds were provided which, with government subsidies, made it possible for restoration and renovations to the value of more than \$1 million. The final step in this endeavour was establishment of a modern out-patients and rehabilitation centre (under the control of the geriatric division of the Caulfield Hospital).

A simple but effective device perfected by the Rotary Club of Padstow, New South Wales, in 1967 alerted neighbours to an emergency in the home of a frail elderly person. Known as the "Save-a-Life Buzzer Kit" it was made up of a battery, a flashing light, an electric bell "clacker" and a switch. The person in distress touched the switch and the red light flashed in the window and the clacker rattled against the window-pane which acted as an amplifier. The distinctive noise could be heard from a considerable distance. So successful was the alarm in its own community that the club mass-produced the device and sold it to other Rotary clubs and community groups for the modest sum of \$6.40. Ten years later the club reported that it had supplied 1,385 buzzer kits to Rotary clubs.

While still in its infancy in the early 1970s, the Rotary Club of New Farm, Queensland, gained the co-operation of the Rotary Clubs of Fortitude Valley and Newstead, the Lions Club and Jaycees of Fortitude Valley and the Apex Club of Brisbane in a joint venture to re-build the Metropolitan Senior Citizens' Centre and equip it with facilities for medical attention, chiropody (now called podiatry),

hairdressing, refreshments and a range of activities. For a small club of about 25 members, this was hailed as an outstanding performance.

The Reservoir Rotary Village, completed in 1979, provided accommodation for the elderly in 23 self-contained units and 37 hostel units. Initiated by John Power, the project involved most members of the Rotary club. Rotarians with special skills were recruited also from Belgrave, Camberwell, Heidelberg and Greensborough clubs.

Thus Rotary clubs continue to identify the needs of the aged and attempt to meet them; but these various projects notwithstanding, Rotarians could hardly claim to have shown remarkable imagination in their services to the elderly. Nor could they fairly claim to have given the needs of the aged high priority in their selection of community services. On the other hand, many elderly people are doubtless better off because of Rotary.

PROBUS

What may appear at first glance to be something of a paradox is that the elderly people who seem to have gained most benefit from Rotary sponsorship are those who seem least likely to have needed it: retired business and professional men and women.

In 1965 Fred Carnhill, a member of the Rotary Club of Welwyn Garden City, U.K., proposed that something be done for the growing number of retired business and professional men - former commuters to London - who seemed to be finding retirement far from satisfying. The result was the Campus Club (named for the part of the city in which it was formed) sponsored by the Rotary club to provide opportunities for retired men to enjoy the companionship of their peers and intellectual stimulation in an environment similar to that of a Rotary club but without the obligations of service and regular attendance. In the following year Harold Blanchard of the Rotary Club of Caterham had a similar idea and gained the support of his club to form the first Probus club (from the "Pro" in professional and "bus" in business which made up the Latin "Probus" - probity or virtue).

At about this time the Council of R.I.B.I. (Rotary International in

Britain and Ireland) was considering the needs of retired executives following recent surveys suggesting that "the sense of isolation experienced by many people who formerly held positions of responsibility and challenge often leads to emotional stress that can actually lead to physical illness. One researcher asserts that one quarter of all British managers are dead within six months of retirement". Therefore, when the success of the Campus and Probus clubs was brought to the attention of the Council, other Rotary clubs were encouraged to meet some of the needs of retired men by sponsoring similar clubs.

So began the steady development of Probus clubs in the U.K.

In 1973 Gordon Roatz of the Rotary Club of Paraparaumu, New Zealand, visiting relations in Helensburgh, Scotland, was told about the Rotary-sponsored Probus club and how it had helped retired people. He brought the idea back to his own Rotary club which, aware of the problems faced by some retired people in its own area, sponsored the formation of the Probus Club of Kapiti Coast, the first Probus club in the Antipodes, on November 5, 1974.

The first introduction of the Probus idea to Australia, according to Bill Jacobs of Hunters Hill, was when Jim King of the Rotary Club of Dumbarton, Scotland, visited the Rotary Club of Parramatta North (now Parramatta City), New South Wales, and told the members about the success of Probus in Great Britain and Ireland. Enough interest was expressed for Jim to ask his club to send information; and in early 1975 Secretary Keith Henning of Parramatta North received a letter from Dumbarton Rotarian John McCulloch enclosing a constitution and program of the Probus Club of Helensburgh, which had been sponsored by the Rotary Club of Dumbarton.

Probus was discussed at the next District Assembly and several Rotary clubs indicated interest in Probus. Further information was obtained from Dumbarton and in November, 1975, largely due to the efforts of Peter Germann, the Rotary Club of Hunters Hill convened the first interest meeting with a view to forming a Probus club.

On February 3, 1976, the Probus Club of Hunters Hill was formed, the first Probus club in Australia.

Despite the fact that both had been formed with the same Scottish club as the model, neither the Kapiti Coast nor Hunters Hill club, at that time, was aware of the existence of the other; but with a report in Rotary Down Under and sharing of information with district governors, more Rotary clubs began to sponsor Probus clubs.

By February, 1981, there were 44 clubs in the region; and five Rotarians in the Sydney metropolitan area, all of whom had been involved in the formation of Probus clubs, met to share experiences. They were District 968 Past Governor Bob Burnett and District Probus Committee member Cec Short, both of the Rotary Club of Turramurra, District 968 Probus Committee Chairman Bill Jacobs (Hunters Hill), District 969 Past Governor Jim Stanford (Padstow) and District 975 Probus Committee Chairman Cliff Johnstone (Sydney).

The object of the meeting was to consider the preparation of some basic information for Rotary clubs contemplating the sponsorship of Probus. They concluded, after some discussion, that the growth of Probus could be "haphazard and spasmodic or planned and systematic" with a strong recommendation in favour of the latter.

The outcome was the Probus Information Committee, with Bob Burnett as chairman, Cec Short as secretary and Bill Jacobs as treasurer. A Probus Information Centre was set up by this committee with the authority of the governors of Districts 968, 969 and 975, covering metropolitan Sydney and near country areas. At this stage of its development, the information centre was no more extensive than any other district or multi-district activity. The committee members gathered information from which, with their own experience, they prepared literature for the guidance of Rotary clubs.

In 1982 Probus clubs for women were formed in St. Heliers, New Zealand, and Bateau Bay, New South Wales; and so began the proliferation of "Ladies' Probus clubs", as they are always called, throughout Rotary's ANZO Region.

In the same year the Probus Information Centre committee cast its net wider, seeking the authority of the 27 governors in Australia

and New Zealand to provide the service for the whole region; and the governors, unable to perceive any good reason for rejecting the offer of a free service to their districts, gladly complied and agreed to appoint district Probus committees to guide Rotary clubs in this program. Funding for the operation was obtained from the corporate sector by way of donations. A quarterly newsletter was distributed to all clubs.

The Probus Information Committee added to its number at will (there being no-one to say them nay), recruiting several more Rotarians and also members of Probus clubs; and in 1983, when the number of clubs had exceeded 150, a small office in Rotary House (the premises of Rotary Down Under, the Rotary Supplies Division and in which was also located the regional office of the Rotary International Secretariat) was secured at a nominal rental and a part-time executive secretary was engaged. The newsletter to club officers was supplanted by a small (eight pages) quarterly magazine available to all members.

In 1983, the Probus Information Centre name was changed to The Probus Centre – South Pacific, the "Probus" name and emblem were registered under the Trade Marks Act and the Centre began to issue accreditation certificates to Probus clubs. Ownership of the Trade Marks was vested in RDU Pty. Limited, the holding company of Rotary Down Under and, at that time, the only legal entity established by all R.I. officers in the region and able to hold property in the name of Rotary. The Rotary Supplies Division included Probus merchandise (lapel badges, presidents' collars, gavels and gongs and a variety of items bearing the Probus emblem) in its stock and agreed to use the term "Probus Supplies" when supplying Probus clubs.

The committee issued to all Rotary District Probus committee chairmen a recommended Probus Club Constitution containing certain mandatory clauses, without which the Probus club could not be accredited and was not entitled to use the Probus name and emblem.

The Probus Centre – South Pacific issued a statement of its responsibilities:- "To *promote the development of Probus in the region by disseminating information to the public and to district

committees and Probus clubs; *Act as the custodian of the Probus name and emblem and protect them from improper use; *Approve accreditation as Probus clubs of those clubs that have been properly formed and sponsored in accordance with the constitution and have agreed to the conditions under which they may be accredited; *Maintain a register of accredited Probus clubs within the ANZO region of Rotary International and prepare and issue annually a Directory of Probus Clubs; *Publish a Probus magazine or newsletter."

By June 1985, there were 435 Probus clubs with some 20,000 members. In 1988 the Probus Centre – South Pacific was incorporated under the Associations Incorporations Act of New South Wales.

With incorporation, the Rotarian members of the Probus Centre Committee insisted on a systematic method of electing members to ensure that it would remain firmly under Rotary supervision and also that the membership would not remain static. Thus the committee of Rotary Down Under Inc. (acting as Board of Directors of RDU Pty. Limited), appointed by the District Governors to conduct the affairs of the Rotary regional magazine of the same name and other specified Rotary activities in the region, elects three recommended members annually for a three-year term to serve on the Probus Centre – South Pacific Inc. management committee. At least one member must be a past officer of Rotary International and usually at least six of the nine-member committee are Rotarians (and usually also Probus members) and at least three members are women. These nine people, plus the members of the Rotary Down Under Management Committee (the board members of RDU Pty. Limited), constitute the membership of the Probus Centre – South Pacific Inc.

With active promotion, almost every Rotary club began to consider the formation of a Probus club. Some saw the need for mixed gender clubs and, despite initial discouragement from the Probus Centre Committee, began to form such clubs; thus many Rotary clubs formed all male, all female and mixed or "combined" clubs in their territories.

It came as something of a surprise to members of the Probus

Centre Committee to learn that the first combined club had been formed as early as 1980 by the Rotary Club of Bondi Junction, New South Wales, and that several more had followed within the next two years. Thus women were being admitted to Probus membership before the first Ladies' Probus club was formed; and even as the committee was gravely concluding, on no evidence beyond the prejudices of its members, that mixed gender clubs would not be desirable.

By early 1990 there were more than 1,000 Probus clubs with some 68,000 members in Australia, New Zealand, Papua-New Guinea and the island nations of the South Pacific. Even Norfolk Island, with a total population of fewer than 1,600 souls, has an active Probus club. The small quarterly magazine had begun to accept advertising in 1985 and was by now appearing in colour with 32 pages.

Probus continued to flourish with more clubs being formed. The small secretariat at the Rotary office was now staffed by a full-time executive secretary with casual clerical staff employed as required. It is financed largely by voluntary donations (based on a per-capita 50 cents) from Probus clubs, but, of course, the charges made by Rotary Down Under for rent and services are nominal, so that Rotary's contribution remains considerable.

The various Probus leaflets, pamphlets and manuals for Rotary clubs and Probus clubs were constantly reviewed and revised. Probus News, which publishes club news and items of interest and concern to its readers, had achieved a regular 48 pages with some 20 pages of advertising by 1995.

Groups of clubs formed themselves into "Probus Associations" for the development of inter-club activities and some regional fellowship gatherings were organised by associations or groups of clubs. After a successful "Septemberfest" in Perth in 1987 and "Operation Handclasp" in association with Expo in Brisbane in 1988, came "Rendezvous 91" in the Barossa Valley, South Australia, "Rendezvous 93" at Port Macquarie, New South Wales, "Rendezvous '95" in Christchurch, New Zealand and "Rendezvous '96" at Echuca, Victoria.

Rotary districts in South Africa, U.S.A. and Canada sought

information about the Probus Centre - South Pacific and its operations and have established their own information centres. The Canadians were given personal help by Bill Thornton, past governor of District 9450 in Western Australia.

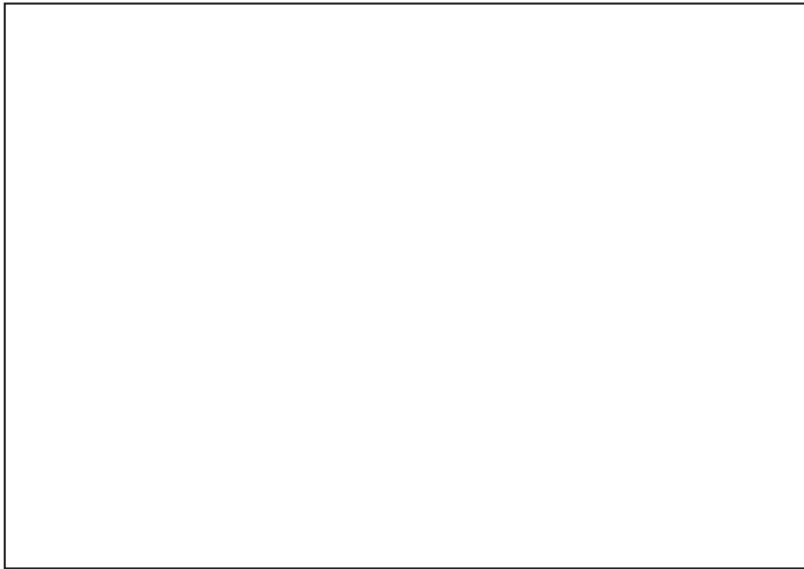
The differences between Probus in the Antipodes and the operation of Probus in its birthplace (the U.K.) and the rest of the world are very obvious. In other Rotary regions Probus is recommended to Rotary clubs as a means of providing an opportunity for fellowship among retired people. There appears to have been no attempt to control, direct or promote its growth and development. In the Antipodes, for good or ill, it has been highly organised with instruction manuals, administrative machinery and controls and the legal authority to withhold or even withdraw accreditation if acceptable standards are not maintained. In their development of Probus, Australian Rotarians have demonstrated again, as they have done with so many other activities, a remarkable talent for the creation of bureaucratic organisation to ensure the co-ordination of effort and the efficient use of resources.

In the U.K. the Rotary Club of Bromford, Worcestershire, agreed, as long ago as 1979, to establish and operate a Probus Information Centre to serve Probus clubs and intending sponsor Rotary clubs in Britain and Ireland, and has continued to provide this service; but no attempt has been made to do anything more than provide information and advice.

Probus statistics for the Rotary world are not completely reliable (for clubs are requested but not required to provide details to their information centres); but available information suggests that Australia and New Zealand, with only a little more than 5% of the world's Rotary clubs, have almost 50% of the world's Probus clubs. In the total region in April, 1996, there were 1,766 clubs and some 151,000 members. Of these Australia and Papua New Guinea had 1,463 clubs and 112,862 members.

Rotary's services to the frail aged and the disadvantaged elderly possibly will be expanded with an ageing population; but this is not

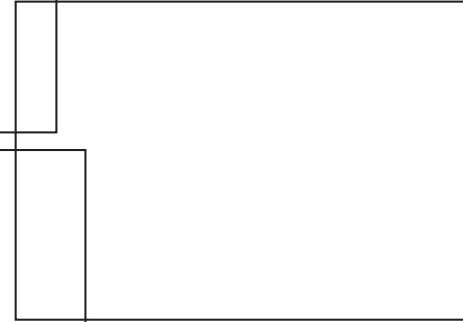
necessarily certain. With the ageing population is a growing community awareness of the needs of older people; and many other community organisations, both statutory and voluntary, are beginning to provide services for this age group; in which case Rotary is probably more likely to withdraw from the field and identify other needs in the community.



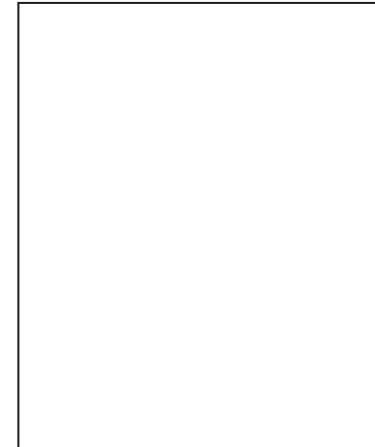
Considering which Probus club or association should have the honour of mounting the next regional gathering, Probus Rendezvous, are the chairman of former Rendezvous committees: John Norman, Christchurch; Ian Doyle, Probus Centre chairman; Kevin Brown, Echuca; Harry Drury, Tea Tree Gully (Barossa); David Merrick, Port Macquarie. Standing is Rotarian Val Style, Probus Centre Executive Secretary. Their unanimous choice for 1997 was Perth.



Left - President Ron Watts of the Rotary Club of Elizabeth hands ACRE Secretary Bill Hale the Elizabeth Club's second cheque for \$A1,000. Below - Erecting the island quarantine sign on Wardang Island was part of the preparation for a rabbit eradication program.

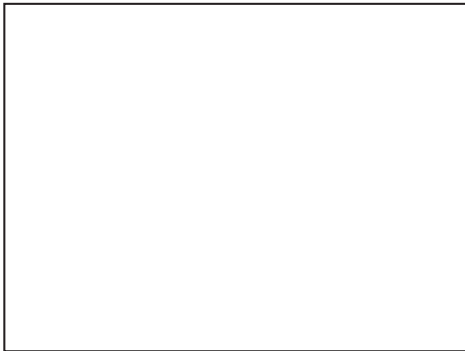


Historic 1987 gathering in Adelaide. From left, Bob Hecker (the then president of the Rotary Club of Adelaide); Rotarian Sir Hubert Opperman; Marjorie (Jackson) Nelson, the "Lithgow Flash", who raised more than \$2 million for leukemia research in memory of her late husband, Rotarian Peter Nelson; Rotarian Sir Donald Bradman (still an honorary member of the Adelaide club; and then District 950 Governor, Graeme Higginson, also a member of the Adelaide club.

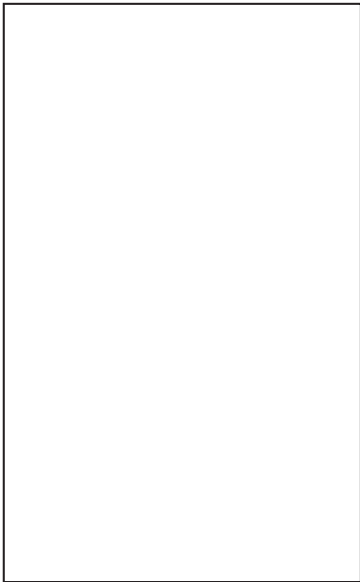


Above - Rotary International President 1993-94 Bob Barth gave Paint Your Heart Out Australia strong support during a visit to Australia. He is pictured left "on the job" at the home of Minerva Dunn at Collingwood, Melbourne, Victoria - with then District 9800 Governor Rob Dunn.

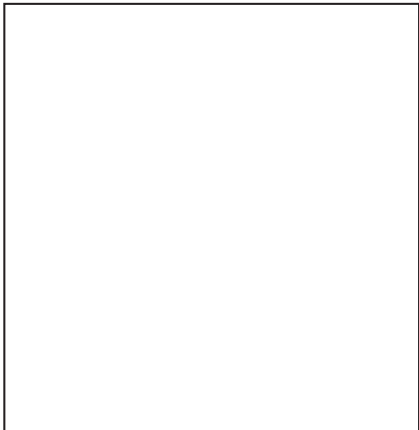
Left - President Paulo Costa lends a hand with a school shade house.



The combined Rotary clubs of Districts 9680, 9690, and 9750 (based on Sydney, N.S.W.) have contributed significantly to the profile of Rotary in recent years with active duty as marshals for "special event" street parades throughout the streets of Sydney. Crowds have always warmly acknowledged Rotary's involvement.



Robert Harrison, at right, found a matched bone marrow donor right at home in younger brother Jeremy. They are pictured in January, 1990 on Robert's discharge from Hospital



Wounded soldiers from Vietnam arrive to a warm welcome at Surfers Paradise for a convalescent holiday.



Central Coast's Walter Leijten (left) presents cheque for Bowelscan research to Dr. Don Frommer.

CHAPTER FOUR

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

WHEN the members of the two-year-old Rotary Club of Chicago provided a public convenience in the City Hall in 1907, though almost certainly unaware of it at the time, they changed the original concept of their little Rotary club from a fellowship and mutual benefit society to a service club and established a tradition of community service that was to be followed by thousands of service clubs into the next century. Also, it is almost certain that they ensured the future of Rotary; for it seems highly improbable that, in its original form, the movement could have survived to become an international association, attracting business and professional leaders to its ranks.

Australian Rotary clubs, in common with most others, began their service work in the community. As seen in previous chapters, the earliest needs they identified and attempted to meet were those of children; and it is fair to say that young people, either physically or mentally handicapped, or otherwise disadvantaged, were the main concern of Rotarians for most of the first decade.

Some early attention was given to the problems of war widows and their children but *Legacy*, a war veterans' service club movement, somewhat similar in structure to Rotary and formed only two years later, assumed responsibility for the widows and children of "fallen comrades". (See Chapter Thirteen.)

After 1929, the great depression of the 1930s brought more than enough community needs to the attention of Rotarians. Unfortunately the depression was no respecter of persons and Rotary suffered its share of losses, some clubs finding it difficult to remain viable; but, though some overseas clubs became casualties, all Australian clubs remained intact, even if for some it was touch and go.

Attempts to provide some relief for the unemployed are recorded by the Rotary Clubs of both Sydney and Melbourne; and in a few rural areas the plight of the growing army of jobless was receiving attention; but the sheer size of the problem and the speed with which it had occurred proved overwhelming to most clubs, especially those that were finding it difficult to retain members.

In what was then (1930) the small town of Cairns in North Queensland, the first Rotary project was to raise £128 for the Benevolent Society by arranging picture shows.

In the southern N.S.W. town of Wagga Wagga, the Rotary club, within a year of its formation in 1929, carried out a minor re-settlement program for selected families living in the "tent town" that had mushroomed nearby - a not uncommon phenomenon on the fringes of country towns during the depression years. The Rotarians built cottages for them in the area known as Gumley Gunley and the families all did so well as a result of their improved accommodation that the club built additional cottages in North Wagga.

In other country towns, Rotary provided essential equipment for local hospitals, perennially short of funds and particularly so during the depression years. The Rotary Club of Tamworth, New South Wales, for example, formed in 1932, immediately launched an appeal for the base hospital, equipped the operating theatre and furnished the children's ward.

In 1938 the Rotary club provided showers for the Inverell High School gymnasium. The cost was £5-19-6.

Available information about pre-war Rotary service is scanty, since the surviving records of the few clubs then existing show more about members, meetings and conferences than about their significant projects. However, every Rotary club was seeking out and meeting what were seen as community needs, such as providing small (and sometimes quite large) parks or bus-stop shelters or drinking fountains or trees and gardens in public places. It must be remembered that, at the outbreak of World War II there were only 65 Rotary clubs in the whole of Australia.

During the war years, 1940-45, the emphasis was on support for the armed forces and provision of comforts for the troops and, as the war progressed, food parcels for Britain. Despite the war, extension did continue, largely in response to an appeal from the Rotary International directors of the time who pointed out that, even in war-torn Britain, clubs were still being formed and were performing valuable work for the war effort and in planning for peace, so that by 1945 there were 99 clubs in Australia.

It was not until the early post-war years, when Rotary in Australia began to expand rapidly, that the vast array of club projects in community service began to appear. Each new club chartered was eager to demonstrate its commitment to service and most began with a community service project; and each succeeding club president in every club seemed determined to emulate his predecessor in the value and extent of his club's community project during "his" year. By now the expectation that every club in the world would initiate and, if possible, complete at last one community project each year was universally accepted. Thus a decade after the war's end, during the 1955-56 year, with some 300 clubs in Australia, it is reasonable to conclude that 300 "major" community projects had been initiated and most of them completed. And during the 1995-96 year it is certain that every one of the 1,178 Rotary clubs has been involved in a community service project of some kind, in addition to an activity under the heading of vocational service and at least one more described as an international service project.

No attempt is made in this work to list the projects of even one club during its history or of a selection of clubs for any one year. Some projects, selected at random from the vast store of club reports now being gathered in the archives and some reported in *The Pinion* (1924-1940) and *Rotary Down Under* (1965-1996) are described briefly at the end of this chapter; but some of those that have had wide influence or significance beyond the individual club's normal area of operation and others that have been organised at a national or regional level are worthy of attention.

Described in earlier chapters were some of the actions taken by the pioneer clubs (Melbourne and Sydney), in setting up organisations and institutions for youth and the elderly. These and others were equally diligent in their search for other areas of need in the community and equally resourceful in the development of strategies to meet them.

In January, 1974 disastrous floods inundated much of the Brisbane metropolitan area and many rural districts in South East Queensland. As they had done before and have done since when disaster strikes, the Rotary clubs responded swiftly and effectively to aid the victims.

In the small hours of Christmas morning of the same year, an ill wind that blew nobody any good – a wild, shrieking, malevolent harridan named Tracey – ripped through the City of Darwin leaving death and total devastation in her wicked wake with 65 dead and 43,000 homeless.

Again the Rotary clubs – and, indeed every other organisation in Australia and many overseas – responded generously to appeals for help. In addition to the provision of immediate disaster relief, the Rotary clubs of the then District 255 covering North Queensland and the Northern Territory, under the leadership of District Governor Nevell McPhee, established a fund, which reached a total of more than \$436,000 for the eventual re-building of community facilities and the re-settlement of families.

Two major disasters in the one year resulted in the appointment by the Australian Rotary Institute of an ad-hoc committee to draw up guidelines for co-ordinated Rotary action in the event of future disasters. The members were Nevell McPhee as chairman and convener, Ron Gough, Glen Kinross, Ray Sadler and Max Tite; and the extent of their researches and the volume of the material they studied were hardly reflected in the concise document they produced which, in five pages of well-spaced type, was a master-piece of detailed organisation planning.

The report and guidelines were adopted and remain the blueprint for Rotary immediate action in the face of flood, fire, cyclone, earthquake and volcanic eruption. Are they followed still when disaster occurs? Probably not. People – and Rotarians are no exception – delight in re-inventing the wheel; but at least they should be aware that the guidelines exist.

State and national emergency services, volunteer bushfire brigades and national organisations such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service have been supported and strengthened, with funds and, more importantly, recruits to their voluntary workforce by

Rotary clubs throughout the years, to the extent that few make more than passing reference to the regular support in their annual reports. Because most communities in Australia and Papua-New Guinea have faced natural disasters of some kind, continuing support of local organisations to cope with them is largely taken for granted.

INDIGENES

At the 1952 conference of the 31st District held in Perth, Dr. H. Gordon Hislop, who was the R.I. president's personal representative, in summing up referred to a presentation on international service by Ollie Oberg of Sydney (later to serve as R.I. director and vice president).

"I challenge Ollie," he said, "and I challenge you . . . we have an international problem right on our hands on our own doorstep."

He then referred to the problems of de-tribalised mixed-race Aborigines, declaring that this was a problem that Australia, up to date, had been content to sidestep.

"To-day," he said, "with men like Paul Hasluk, a Western Australian who is doing his utmost for the Australian Aboriginal . . . and (with others) in all States, I think we can see a day dawning when that problem will be one which we, as Australians, will have the courage to tackle . . . Until we do, I wonder whether we have the right to look . . . for understanding outside our borders. We need it inside first. And I issue that as the possible challenge (to) every one of us. Not that I don't ask you to learn understanding from abroad . . . my journeys . . . taught me to respect men of all colours and all creeds; but I still think we have a problem . . . at home (and it is) something we can do."

Since then, many Rotary clubs have devised projects and programs to help indigenous people, mainly concerned with education, housing, health and youth employment. Included were a trade training scheme established in 1970 by the Rotary Club of Geebung, Qld; a leadership training course devised by the Rotary Club of Perth in 1972; and a program of educational assistance combined with family guidance inaugurated in 1965 by the Rotary Club of South Sydney.

When a small contingent of nuns was sent by Mother Teresa from India to Bourke, New South Wales, to work among disadvantaged Aboriginal "fringe-dwellers" in 1973 they needed a building in which to conduct classes in cooking, home-making, hygiene, sewing, mothercraft and typing. The Rotary club gladly provided the 18 x 6 metre, three-room building, using largely donated materials and their own labour, earning the friendship of the Sisters and their students.

In 1978 Frank Totenhofer of the Rotary Club of Blaxland-Springwood, New South Wales (now Lower Blue Mountains), attempted to tackle a more fundamental problem: the education of European-Australians, beginning with Rotarians, in Aboriginal culture. This he introduced to his club with a well-researched slide and script program of his own creation.

Impressed with the program and convinced of the need to share these concerns with others, the club recommended to the Australian Rotary Institute that a program of education for Rotarians be devised to ensure that future projects for Aboriginal welfare would be based on an understanding of their own culture, values and aspirations rather than on the goals and value-system of middle-class European-Australians. The Institute adopted the recommendation and appointed an ad-hoc committee of past governors under the leadership of Emeritus Professor A.G.Mitchell of Sydney with Rod Voller of Queensland, Ray Graetz of Victoria and Bill Thornton of Western Australia (all Institute members) and with John Croker of South Australia co-opted because of his specialised knowledge of Aboriginal people, to study the problem and suggest solutions. The thoughtful, well-presented report and guidelines adopted at the following Institute were commended to clubs but were couched in terms not readily comprehensible to busy and practical Rotarians and failed to gain significant currency.

Refusing to be discouraged, the Blaxland-Springwood club set about producing an audio-visual program, based on Frank Totenhofer's original script and slides, to help Rotarians understand the unique culture of Aborigines, comparing their arts, religion, beliefs, values, land-use and way of life with those of Euro-

peans. Too expensive for mass production, the program was loaned by the club to local groups for some years until the popularity of video-tapes made reproduction simple and inexpensive, whereupon, in 1990, it was again submitted to the Institute which endorsed its use by clubs and suggested its distribution through RDU Rotary Supplies. Clubs in all districts have made use of the program, many sharing it with other groups in the community. In New South Wales it was adopted by the State Education Department for use in secondary schools and copies were given by many clubs to their local schools. The title of the program is International Understanding Begins at Home, which seems to reflect the concerns expressed by Gordon Hislop in 1952.

MENTAL HEALTH

In Melbourne, arising from considerable public disquiet and unfavourable press reports of the plight of the mentally ill, the Rotary club not only financed a mental health survey by a team of medical students under the supervision of the State Mental Hygiene Authority but raised the funds (more than £40,000) and built a day-care centre for the patients of the Kew Mental Hospital. The outcome of the increased public awareness was a strengthened Mental Health Association in the State which facilitated the eventual federation of the various State associations into the Mental Health Association of Australia.

HEALTH RESEARCH

In 1981 Ian Scott, of the Rotary Club of Mornington, Victoria, proposed that \$2 million be raised by Rotary clubs in Australia for investment to finance health research. Not unexpectedly, the proposal met with strong opposition. However, the District 982 Conference adopted the proposal for submission to the Rotary Institute which, again in the face of strenuous opposition, adopted the proposal and appointed a steering committee, the members of which were Royce Abbey, Geoff Betts, Les Whitcroft and Ian Scott.

The opposition to such proposals is traditional. Rotary clubs are expected to identify and meet needs and should not become fund-raising agencies for grandiose schemes at district, state or

national level. In fact, as most Rotarians should be aware, there are specific safeguards to discourage the proliferation of multi-club and multi-district projects; including the requirement that all participating clubs (or districts) must agree to the proposal and that participation by any individual club must be voluntary.

The steering committee asked all Australian districts to accept the concept of a health research fund in principle, which they did, having been assured that this would be a "one off" effort; and that the fund, once established, would generate enough interest from investments to finance one or more annual research projects. With the acceptance of all districts, the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund was duly established as an incorporated body and approved by the Rotary International Board of Directors as a multi-district activity.

A major concern at the time – and the principal "selling point" – was "S.I.D.S." or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, more commonly known as "Cot Death", each incidence of which was widely reported in the media, with a strong emotional component in each story. So, after consultation with Dr. A. L. Williams whose "Cot Death" research at Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne was widely known and highly respected, the first major research grant was for an investigation into the possible causes of this frightening phenomenon. But it was decided that, after the initial major grants, the Fund would support "a wider concept of health research... there (being) many aspects of community health that urgently require research and the Rotary fund was in a position to perform a valuable community service by sponsoring research into otherwise neglected areas".

By some mysterious means, the suggestion of a "one off" project vanished from later literature and a donation to the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund became an annual commitment for almost all Australian clubs.

By 1987-88 the initial target of \$2 million had been reached and research grants of more than \$320,000 had been made. By April 1996 this total had been increased to more than \$7.1 million. The corpus target now appears limitless with the figure of \$20 million being suggested as a realistic objective, which would enable Rotary

to provide research grants of \$2 million annually.

There are still complaints, particularly from some older Rotarians who argue that this and the other major activities for which annual support is demanded severely restrict the ability of many clubs to meet the needs of their local communities; but annual reports of the Fund, emphasising the value of the research being financed, seem to counter these objections quite effectively. In fact the directors confidently assert that 94.3% of clubs favour regular annual support of the Fund.

Proof of the value of research funded by the A.R.H.R.F. was shown in 1991 when The Lancet published the findings of Professor Terry Dwyer, of the Menzies Centre for Population Health Research in Tasmania, into Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Professor Dwyer highly praised the Rotary Health Research Fund.

The stated objectives of the A.R.H.R.F. are:-

- To provide financial support to research projects which will enhance the health of the community;
- To stimulate research activities within Australia by facilitating communication between participants;
- To ensure continuity of research effort by making grants for up to three years where required;
- To encourage research projects which may have a practical outcome capable of being applied to community groups.

Governed by a board of directors of 10 past officers of R.I., the Fund allocates grants on the advice of a research committee made up of eminent Australian medical and para-medical professionals, currently (1996) including a leading psychiatrist and a specialist adolescent physician from New South Wales; a professor of psychiatry and a specialist paediatrician physician from Victoria, a professor of paediatrics from Queensland, a nurse-educator and health service administrator from South Australia and a specialist paediatrician and medical researcher from Western Australia. Chairman of the committee is Dr. Clarrie Gluskie, a past governor of District 9750.

In making research grants, the emphasis in the first triennium was on infants, in the second on the elderly and the third on adolescent health. Beginning in 1996, the field of research is

Family Health, because of evidence that there is a need for research into areas such as family dysfunction and child abuse; learning disabilities and behaviour problems; homeless youth; depression, despair and youth suicide; drug abuse and alcoholism; and into other disorders apparently beginning in unhealthy families. The long-term objective, of course, is to improve the quality of family life, well-being and health.

The Health Fund approaches promotion and fund-raising in a highly professional way, sponsoring annual State seminars for Rotary's incoming district officers, issuing a newsletter after each board meeting (five or six a year), arranging for television commercials as "community service announcements", providing speakers for Rotary clubs, publishing a promotional report in Rotary Down Under each year, distributing audio-visual video tapes, producing promotional brochures and offering inducements such as trophies and special plaques and naming "Companions" for donations of \$5,000 or more in any one year.

To celebrate 75 years of Rotary service in Australia, and the 10th year of research grants, the A.R.H.R.F. in 1996 launched a special appeal, offering handsome trophies to clubs and individuals who make generous donations.

From an idea in one Rotary club, the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund has become one of the largest privately-funded research foundations in Australia.

Since its inception, the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund has been generously served by 31 distinguished past officers of Rotary International who have given their time and talents to its growth, development and administration. Directors are elected for a term of three years and are eligible for re-election for one further three-year term. The first chairman was Royce Abbey (1984-87) followed by Geoff Betts (1988-90), Colin Dodds (1991-93), Bruce Edwards (1994-95) and Bruce McKenzie (from 1996). A very useful member of the board is broadcaster, film-maker, communicator Leon Becker, whose skills have been made available to the Health Fund.

The first office was established in Canberra under the supervision of Jack Olsson and with Geoff Stevens as secretary. In 1989 the

Fund office was re-located in the Rotary Down Under building at Parramatta. Secretary since 1990 has been Joy Gillett, president-elect of the Rotary Club of Parramatta City, who is also staff supervisor at Rotary Down Under House. Joy, who first joined the Rotary Down Under staff as a junior clerk-typist at the age of 17, has grown up with Rotary and brings to the Health Fund a wealth of Rotary experience.

* * *

An unusual health research project in which Rotary clubs have been involved is the Rotary Peter Nelson Leukaemia Research Fund.

Peter Nelson was a member of the Rotary Club of Unley, South Australia, who held several offices and was responsible for forming the first Rotaract club in the then District 250; but he was better known as an Australian Olympic cyclist. At the 1952 Games in Helsinki, Peter met and was captivated by sprinter Marjorie Jackson, "The Lithgow Flash", who, in that year, won three gold medals. They married and made their home in Adelaide where their happiness was increased by their family of two daughters and a son.

In 1975, their felicity was shattered by tragedy in the form of chronic myeloid leukaemia with which Peter was found to be suffering. He died in February, 1977.

Distraught, Marjorie vowed, in her grief, to devote her life to finding a cure for leukaemia so that others would not suffer as Peter had done. Her vision was to raise a million dollars to establish a research fund.

Her first approach was to Deputy Premier Des Corcoran who opened the fund with the first dollar and suggested that she enlist the support of Rotary District 250 Governor Ross Irvine. Finding enthusiastic support from clubs in the district, Ross formed a district committee, with a strong nucleus from Unley.

The first fund-raising venture was a monster raffle with a four-wheel-drive vehicle and masses of camping equipment as first prize; and Marjorie solicited Rotary district support in a remarkable address to the district conference in the presence of Premier Don Dunstan.

The Fund was officially launched in August, 1977 and on January 31, 1978, less than a year after Peter Nelson's death, PDG

Ross Irvine was able to present a cheque for \$160,000 to the Anti-Cancer Foundation. The money was placed in a special fund to endow the Peter Nelson Research Fellowship. The first Fellow was Dr. Leonie Ashman, whose work has received international recognition.

The creation of the Fellowship was pleasing to Marjorie; but her goal was \$1 million; and to reach it she demonstrated the same determination and commitment as had characterised her pursuit of Olympic gold. She seemed indefatigable in her personal efforts and was audacious in her approaches to people in high places; so that, with the assistance of willing volunteers throughout Australia, she reached her original target in 1986 and was given a civic reception by Adelaide's Lord Mayor.

Seven years later (1993) another civic reception signalled a second million dollars; and in 1996 she is heading for a third. The additional funds have provided further fellowships to Dr. Alexander Dobrovic and Dr. Michael Brisco.

Though very much a personal triumph for Marjorie, her committee still has continuing Rotary membership. Past members are Dennis Gerschwitz and Roy Osborn while current members are Ross Irvine (since 1977), Kevin Parkinson (since 1986), Robert Edwards (since 1988) and Rod Carter (since 1990).

The Rotary Peter Nelson Leukaemia Research Fund is a fine example of Rotary working with other members of the community. The Fund remains a totally voluntary organisation with no overheads or administration costs. The Anti-Cancer Council has provided scientific advisory support and Marjorie meets all her own expenses personally. Thus every dollar raised, from the first one donated by Des Corcoran, has been devoted to the quest to find a cure for leukaemia.

* * *

The most effective treatment for leukemia so far discovered is bone-marrow transplant; but this requires a perfectly matched donor, always difficult and often impossible to find. An obvious need was for a modern unit at a major hospital to streamline the search for donors and to carry out essential research into bone-marrow transplants.

In 1992 this need was brought to the attention of Gordon McKern, then governor nominee of District 9800, by Lee McKeand of the Rotary Club of Prahran, Victoria. Soon convinced of the value of a project to provide a research facility and, with the enthusiastic support of the clubs of the district, Gordon launched a campaign to raise \$2 million in two years.

After Gordon's year as governor, the campaign was carried on, with his continuing involvement, by his successor, Rob Dunn. Dr Raymond Martyrs of the Rotary Club of Kew was chairman of the district co-ordinating committee and arranged all formal approaches to the corporate sector, charitable trusts and foundations.

The Rotary Bone Marrow Research Centre at the Royal Melbourne Hospital is the living, working tribute to the efforts of Gordon McKern and the clubs of the district. It houses the offices of the Bone Marrow Donor Institute which registers donors, the Tissue Typing Laboratories which classify the donors, and the research facility and support services.

The Rotary Heart Centre in Perth, Western Australia, was a 1977 initiative of the Rotary Club of Perth, working in conjunction with the National Heart Foundation and with the co-operation of the Department of Public Health and the University of Western Australia. Assistance was also given by the A.M.A. and the AMP Society, which provided computer facilities.

The project involved a research program to determine the heart-health risk in the community and the setting up of a centre in which citizens could be screened for heart-risk factors.

The public responded generously to a public appeal, which was also supported by other Rotary clubs in the State. The Rotary Club of Subiaco, for example, raised \$3,500 at a theatre night.

Dr. Paul Magnus was awarded the Perth Rotary Post Graduate Scholarship in Preventive Cardiology to enable him to undertake the necessary research at the University.

Within one year, more than 1,000 people at risk of major heart problems had been located.

MEDIC ALERT

The internationally-known Medic Alert Foundation was introduced to Australia by District 265 (9650) Governor James

Small in 1966, who appointed a district committee and invited other districts to participate.

Medic Alert was devised in the U.S.A. to bring appropriate emergency medical treatment to people at risk because of particular medical conditions or allergies. Each member wears a bracelet or necklace medallion of stainless steel (commonly known as a "dog tag") on which is engraved the wearer's specific medical condition or allergy, a serial number and telephone number of the central Medic Alert office.

Meeting with less than enthusiastic support in its district of origin in Northern New South Wales because of perceived administrative and communication problems in a district lacking the facilities available in a major city, the plan was considered by clubs in several other districts until, in 1969, it was brought to the attention of the Australian Rotary Institute, which appointed a committee to study the proposal.

Arising from the report and recommendations of the Institute committee, Medic Alert was taken up, promoted and co-ordinated as an Australia-wide project by a District 250 (9500) committee chaired by PDG Phil Kearns.

This committee's detailed planning and efficient execution resulted in the successful completion of the project. The Medic Alert Foundation was established in Adelaide in October, 1971, in co-operation with the St. John Ambulance Brigade and with the subsequent support of the Australian College of General Practitioners. The involvement of Rotarians in Medic Alert has continued.

The successful experiment in South Australia was followed by the adoption of Medic Alert for Western Australia as a District 245 (9450) project at the district conference in March, 1972. DG Jack Sweeney appointed Joseph (Griff) Griffiths, a past president of the Rotary Club of Perth, to lead a district committee.

Gaining the immediate support of the State Minister for Health and the ready co-operation of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, the Australian Medical Association and the Pharmacy Guild, the district committee was able to establish the service in Western Australia in record time. On May 22, 1972, Medic Alert was officially inaugurated by the Lord Mayor of Perth.

Between them the two Medic Alert centres, manned 24 hours a day, serve the whole of Australia. More than 200,000 people with health problems now wear the readily-recognisable "dog tags" that promptly bring them the appropriate treatment.

WOUNDED SERVICEMEN

When Australian troops were sent to Vietnam in 1965, many citizens were bitterly opposed to this country's involvement. This, of course, is a matter of history - the protests, the street marches, the angry letters in the press both for and against, the "birthday ballots" with relief for some and an agonising decision for others; but most of those called up for service just did the job they were ordered to do in a war in which they did not necessarily believe.

Because the war was different from all other conflicts in which Australia had been engaged, and because the whole country was divided on the question of our involvement, the young heroes who fought in Vietnam were not treated as heroes. For obeying the law as it was and putting their lives at grave risk in their country's service, they were ignored by some and vilified by others.

Fortunately they were not forgotten by all; especially the Rotary Club of Surfers Paradise on the Queensland Gold Coast, which offered a free convalescent holiday to all Australian servicemen wounded or incapacitated in the war. In 1966 the scheme was extended to include New Zealand servicemen; and the wives and children of married servicemen were invited to share the holiday.

The plan was to provide a holiday in first class accommodation on the Gold Coast to help in their convalescence and hasten their complete recovery while, at the same time, showing that responsible citizens honoured and respected them for their service and cared about their welfare.

The holiday was normally for two weeks, but could be extended on a doctor's recommendation. All accommodation, meals and transport from the hospital in which they had been treated, in any of the Capital cities, were provided free of charge. Continuing medical treatment was provided by arrangement with the Repatriation Department. Naturally the boys, who had been carried off the

battlefield, flown home and treated in hospital, were not at all averse to the attention they received and were quick to express their appreciation. At any one time there were from 20 to 60 wounded lads being accommodated.

The Rotarian behind this program was Griff Mackay, who seems to have been involved in several of Rotary's significant initiatives; first in Melbourne in the 1950s, later in Sydney and finally at Surfers, where he thought he had gone to relax in his retirement. He was fully supported by the members of the club and, indeed, the citizens of the Gold Coast, who took the boys to their hearts. The organising was left in the hands of a small committee with Griff as chairman, Ken Bromley as secretary and Roy Kennedy co-ordinating transport so that those from each Capital city arrived on the same flight and could be met at the airport and welcomed as a group.

What the Surfers Paradise club found most touching was the appreciation shown by the troops still in Vietnam, who made regular collections and, during 1970, sent unsolicited donations of more than \$16,000 to help the Rotarians to continue the scheme for their wounded comrades.

Out of this scheme arose another contribution to the morale of the fighting forces when the Rotary Clubs of South Brisbane and Beaudesert, with the support of other clubs in Districts 260 and 263 (9600 and 9630) provided the funds to send a concert party to Vietnam and to buy the musical instruments for the tour.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental projects and programs have become increasingly popular with Rotary clubs since the early 1970s when world attention began to be focussed on the fragility of the planet by concerned scientists and others who recognised the damage being caused by homo sapiens.

Numerous clubs have reported tree-planting projects, clean-up days, wildlife protection programs, soil conservation schemes and air-pollution control measures as community service activities. Tree planting has been particularly popular in recent years, with projects ranging from a few trees planted in a local park to avenues of 500

native and exotic species.

In South Australia, ACRE, the Australia Campaign for Rabbit Eradication, is a joint project of Districts 9500 and 9520 led with zeal by Don Sarah. Despite the recent appearance of calici virus, follow-up work is likely to continue for some years.

At a national level the Trees for Survival project has captured the imagination of some 201 clubs and interest continues to grow.

As usually happens, the idea was germinated in one club, in the Sydney suburb of Turrumurra, when, responding to appeals from the environmental movements to plant more trees, the members developed a shade house in which to germinate and grow native trees and nurture them until they were ready for planting in areas of the country that had been denuded of vegetation.

The club sought the co-operation of the nearby State school at Wahroonga. The object was to have a shade house built by the Rotarians in the school grounds and give the children the task of raising the seedlings until they were mature enough to plant out in country areas west of the Great Dividing Range. The shade house was a demountable structure of steel pipes, covered with shade cloth.

The Rotarians enjoyed the experience of working on the shade house and the children were delighted with their involvement and immediately gained a better appreciation of the value of trees, learned a great deal about native trees and the vulnerability of certain species to plant diseases and also became increasingly aware of the total environment.

The project was described at the 1988 Institute by Bob Burnett, a past governor of District 968 (9680) and a member of the Turrumurra club. The Institute was sufficiently impressed to commend the shade house project to other clubs as a useful community service idea of environmental and educational value.

By 1990 there were so many enquiries that the member of the Turrumurra club who had volunteered to respond to them was overloaded. A part time secretary was engaged with a small office in the Rotary Down Under building and the project was approved by all incumbent governors as a multi-district program.

Trees for Survival was incorporated in 1991 and is now

administered by a committee of management. In 1991 Ray Reed, a past governor of District 969, accepted the invitation of the committee to manage the operation.

A major manufacturer of steel products agreed to provide the shade house superstructure at cost and manufacturers of garden supplies provided shade cloth. Rotary clubs were encouraged to seek local sponsorship of the shade houses. Thus they are erected by the voluntary labour of Rotarians at no cost to the Rotary club. The sponsors and suppliers are rewarded with a discreet but obvious display of their names on the completed shade house.

The Committee of Management issues a comprehensive instruction manual so that the sponsoring Rotary club and the selected school or institution has but to follow a set of simple guidelines to ensure complete success.

In 1995 Trees for Survival Inc. launched a special project known as Trees for 2000 to emphasise the urgency of wide revegetation by the year 2000 and beyond.

Some 200 shade houses had been completed by early 1996 and many more Rotary clubs had agreed to add Trees for 2000 to their minor community service projects within the next year. Others have sought literature, so it seems likely that shade houses will continue to proliferate around Australia; particularly since some Rotary clubs with several schools within their boundaries are planning a second shade house.

Though the emphasis is mainly on primary schools because of the obvious educational value to young children, shade houses have been erected at other institutions, including a university, a school for the intellectually handicapped, a juvenile detention centre and a low security adult correctional establishment (the modern and politically correct euphemism for a prison farm).

Trees for 2000 co-operates with Greening Australia, the Australian Nature Conservation Agency, National Parks and Wildlife and State education, agriculture, lands and water resources authorities.

OTHER COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The few projects here listed are examples only of the vast range of activities undertaken by Rotary clubs to fulfill their community

service obligations.

Beginning with the first page of John Peden's report for one year, 1951-52, as governor of the 31st district, which then covered Northern New South Wales and all of Queensland, the following club activities in community service (including services to youth) were recorded:-

Atherton continued provision of playground equipment begun the previous year and donated £65 to the Boy Scouts.

Ballina also provided playground equipment and assisted the Boy Scouts.

Babinda took the first steps to establish a town library and youth club, donated £20 to the Boy Scouts, provided bursaries and contributed £10 to a fund to provide playground equipment.

Brisbane organised Civic Week, described as "a worthwhile function". The club also established its permanent club rooms in that year to improve the efficiency of the club and thus the effectiveness of its service.

Bundaberg perpetuated the memory of famous aviator Bert Hinkler with an avenue of flowering shrubs; and also completed provision of playground equipment.

Boonah continued its work on provision of a special area for "Tiny Tots".

Cairns gave support to the Flying Doctor Service, took children hospital patients on outings, provided comforts and amenities for hospitals and also installed playground equipment.

Casino founded a horticultural society, assisted the Spastic Centre and Playground Association and began construction of an Olympic swimming pool.

Charters Towers conducted its annual essay competition in schools and colleges and also sponsored a concert to entertain soldier trainees.

Coolangatta-Tweed Heads provided a ten day holiday for spastic children and their guardians (an annual event) and endowed a bursary for needy children to enable them to undertake senior secondary education.

Dalby raised £200 for playground equipment.

Fortitude Valley continued its assistance to the Spastic League;

raised funds towards a £50,000 appeal to provide buildings and equipment and was strongly represented on the Spastic League Board; organised two successful concerts by the Australian Boys' Choir with proceeds to the Spastic Appeal and also presented two ambulances to the Spastic League.

Gatton provided a hut for Scouts, Guides and Wolf Cubs.

Gladstone Rotarians, by means of a series of working bees, built a hut for Scouts and Guides.

Gayndah installed playground equipment in Rotary Park.

Gympie installed radio equipment in the local hospital, participated in Civic Week, worked on a Guides hut and seats at bus stops.

Grafton, in co-operation with the Apex club, raised a large sum for local charities and, with the assistance of the Boy Scouts, held a successful "book drive" to provide books for the hospital and the orphanage.

Ingham raised £67 towards the installation of a radio receiver and 50 sets of headphones for the hospital, promoted a tree-planting scheme and began a project to instal air conditioning in the local hospital.

Innisfail provided funds for a child-minding centre, worked for the "Queen Competition" and local agricultural society and planted more trees in Rotary Park.

Ipswich took over maintenance of playground equipment, and also held a successful garden party raising £200 for the Opportunity School.

Kyogle established playground equipment on three sites.

The rapid growth of the playground movement of the 1940s and 50s and community concern for spastic children resulting from promotion of Spastic Associations and Leagues and the development of spastic centres are reflected in the projects adopted by clubs.

Taking a wider view of community service throughout Australia over the 75 years, one gains some impression of the extent and variety of the many needs that individual Rotary clubs identify and attempt to meet.

The Australian Administrative Staff College, now an institution

with an enviable reputation, was established in 1954 by the Rotary Club of Sydney. Modelled on the Administrative Staff College at Henley-on-Thames, U.K., the Principal of which was generous with information and advice, the college was incorporated in 1955 with the 28 distinguished signatories to its Articles coming from every State and Territory of Australia.

A classroom attached to the children's ward in the local hospital was built and equipped by the Rotary Club of West Wollongong, New South Wales.

Regarded as one of the most significant club projects was the formation of a service club movement for young business men. In 1930 the first Apex club was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Geelong, Victoria. Initially known as the Geelong Young Businessmen's Club, for young business and professional men between the ages of 18 and 35 years, with aims similar to those of the sponsoring Rotary club, the name was changed to Apex in March, 1931. Other Rotary clubs soon began to sponsor the formation of Apex clubs and, of course, Apex clubs were doing their own extension until, by the mid 1950s, Rotary's help was no longer needed. By 1980 there were more than 800 Apex clubs with 16,000 members. Unhappily, there has been a serious decline of Apex membership since the late 1980s and many clubs were forced to surrender their charters or to amalgamate with others. The principal reason given is the lack of compassion engendered by the "greedy 1980s", but many Apexians feel that failure to admit women to Apex has been an important factor. Further attempts are being made in the 1990s to have the constitution amended to give clubs the option of admitting young women and, with vigorous membership drives, there were hopeful signs of an Apex resurgence in the 1990s. Apexians retain their membership until they reach 40, when they are given an honourable discharge and are usually snapped up by Rotary or Lions clubs.

In 1970 a lodge was built at Royal North Shore Hospital by the Rotary Club of Lane Cove, New South Wales. The lodge consisted of two motel-type units with bed-sitting room and en-suite bathroom for short-term occupation by close relatives of critically ill or badly injured patients. Such was the demand for this emergency

accommodation that in 1972 the club added two more units to "Rotary Lodge".

A talk about blood pressure as a risk factor in heart disease by a professor of medicine prompted the Rotary Club of Greensborough, Victoria, in 1972, to conduct a blood pressure survey. With the co-operation of the local council, hospitals, medical practitioners and nurses, the blood pressure of more than 700 people was checked in one day, indicating that 10% of the population had elevated blood pressure and were unaware of it. The information was widely used through the media to encourage people to have periodical blood pressure checks.

In 1954-55 as its Rotary 50th Anniversary project, the Rotary Club of Inverell, New South Wales, sponsored beautification of a park and members also provided assistance at the memorial baths project. Three years later it is recorded that the club was beautifying the War Memorial Baths. The club also provided two scholarships valued at ten guineas each to third year students "to encourage further study"; and club members cut 25 tons of firewood for the hospital.

Identifying soil erosion as a serious problem that was potentially disastrous, the Rotary Club of Moora, Western Australia, with the co-operation of the Department of Agriculture, devised a soil conservation program in 1959. Selecting an area of land, the club persuaded farmers to set up contour banks on their properties to control water run-off. The object was to reclaim eroded paddocks and minimise flooding of flats along the watercourse. Three years later the success of the scheme was demonstrated to farmers from many regions.

To celebrate the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981) the Rotary Club of Charlestown, New South Wales, constructed a sensory trail for blind people. The 200 metre trail led through bush-land at the headwaters of a fresh-water creek. Knots in a rope extending the full length of the trail identified trees, shrubs and other plants, while cassette tapes guided visitors along the trail.

Among the many visible projects within its community is a community care and health centre built by the Rotary Club of Mount Gravatt, Queensland, for the Blue Nursing Service.

Commended many years later by Rotary International Director Ken Scheller, who saw the annual report for 1941-42, was the then 19-member Rotary Club of Traralgon, Victoria, which, in its first year of service, launched an appeal to provide a community hospital, collected waste paper for patriotic funds, planted a circle of trees in Victory Park, provided tree guards, dug 600 yards of air-raid trenches at the local school, renovated and painted the town swimming pool, financially supported the local branch of the Returned Services League and the Air Training Corps, assisted the wives and families of men on active service and began plans for post-war reconstruction in the town.

In the city of Broken Hill, New South Wales, in 1965, the Rotarians were jolted into action by the near death of a child who had raided the family first-aid box and had swallowed a number of pills or capsules, believing them to be sweets. Realising that there must be many partly used bottles of prescription drugs in the medicine cabinets of the citizens, the Rotarians organised a door-to-door collection on one Sunday with local Scouts and Guides to swell the work force and with the support of local media to alert the public. They collected pills and potions weighing more than two tons, from which a team of pharmacists salvaged 12¹/₂ cwt of usable material which was handed over to the Red Cross. The story appeared in Rotary Down Under and the idea was taken up by many clubs throughout the region. Operation Cleanout (sometimes called Operation Drug Take) was seen as a very useful community service project, alerting the public to the danger of keeping prescription medicines within the reach of children and reminding them to dispose of unused drugs; with a "fringe benefit" to the Red Cross which could use some of the materials in those countries in which they were desperately needed.

In 1976, District 269 (9690) covering the western suburbs of Sydney and near country areas rallied the support of 34 Rotary clubs and 23 Rotaract clubs to build a sports stadium for the disabled with facilities for wheel-chair games and other recreational activities. Under the quiet but determined leadership of PDG H.W.(Mick) Shephard, an enthusiastic committee worked tirelessly for six years and the participating clubs dreamed up an impressive

array of fund-raising schemes. Probably the most unusual venture by a bunch of Rotaractors was a raft-race some 1200 kilometres down the Darling River to its confluence with the Murray.

After hearing a news broadcast at the site of a serious road accident and the comment by a doctor that all vehicles should be equipped with some sort of emergency facility so that those first on the scene could render assistance, a traffic accident emergency kit to be kept in the car was devised and marketed by the Rotary Club of Riverwood, New South Wales, while in the south west of the State, the Griffith Rotarians established a very effective procedure for bringing aid to road accident victims, especially those far from home, ensuring that they were visited in hospital, uninjured family members were cared for and contact maintained with relations.

A lodge for the families of cancer patients in Townsville hospitals was built by the Rotary Club of Ross River, Queensland.

The Rotary Club of Lismore, New South Wales, began screening programs for colorectal cancer in 1983, using test kits. The program was taken up by other clubs and within 10 years 150 clubs in 11 districts were conducting "bowelscan" screenings. In 1992 a Rotary National Bowelscan Committee was formed to develop community awareness of bowel cancer and to promote methods for early detection.

To mark the sesqui-centenary of Western Australia and Rotary's 75th year in 1980 the Rotary Club of Scarborough, a beach-side suburb, presented the community with a memorial clock atop a 12 metre tower bearing the Rotary emblem and the State Coat of Arms. Visible to the surfers and sun-worshippers on the beach, the clock was given into the care of the surf-lifesaving club. With due ceremony the clock was unveiled by the State Governor.

In the same year, with a similar bright idea, the Rotary Club of Port Pirie in South Australia, celebrating its 25th anniversary and Rotary's 75th, presented its city with a handsome clock, 7.5 metres high which stands outside the administration centre in the main thoroughfare, its 1.2 metre square faces clearly visible from both ends of the busy street.

In 1975 the new Rotary Club of Bassendean, Western Australia, with only 24 members, presented a mini-bus to the local council for

the transport of disabled, sick and elderly people in the community. In more recent years (1991-93) the club has conducted a five-event relay marathon, attracting more than 150 teams competing in road running, cycling, swimming, canoeing, cross-country running, donating the funds raised to CanTeen - the support group for teenage cancer patients. The 1993 donation was some \$30,000.

To raise funds for their various projects, Rotary clubs show remarkable ingenuity. Indeed some of their activities have become famous.

In Mount Isa, Queensland, an annual rodeo attracts huge crowds and raises large sums of money; while the Henley-on-Todd regatta in Alice Springs receives nation-wide news coverage each year as teams compete in the various "aquatic" events on the dry bed of the Todd River.

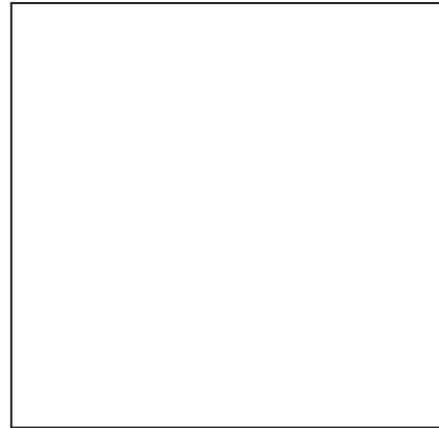
Clubs run fairs and garden fetes, barbecues and sausage sizzles, flower shows and art shows and stage shows (the Arts and Crafts show at Deloraine, Tasmania, is claimed to be the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere and had raised more than \$500,000 in 13 years to 1994, while the fame of the Wynyard Music Hall has spread across Bass Strait to the mainland and for 25 years has played to capacity houses), concerts, plays and fireworks displays, air pageants, race-days, art unions and raffles: the Rotary Club of Balmain, New South Wales, in 1975 won a Significant Achievement Award for raffling a Rolls Royce, raising \$48,418 for local hospitals. They hold jumble sales, junk auctions, market days, car rallies, fun-runs and even a "skateathon" in Armidale North, New South Wales. With the help of television and radio stations they conduct "telethons" and "radiothons" which, despite the anguish of English purists at the assault on our language, yield huge sums as listeners or viewers telephone their pledges which are acknowledged by well-known identities.

They build houses with voluntary labour and sell them at a handsome profit. They raise livestock for sale. The Rotary Club of Blackheath, on the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, planted a pine

forest and used the thinnings each year for sale as Christmas trees and finally sold the lumber. Parramatta City sells Christmas trees, specially grown at Blayney, as its principal annual fundraiser, usually gaining more than \$20,000 to finance its projects. The Rotarians of Pakenham, Victoria, became potato farmers for a season, raising \$5,000 for a sheltered workshop.

They seek sponsorship for members who agree to do odd things in Rotary's name. In Georgetown, Tasmania, they permitted member Neil Ellis to cycle 1,000 kilometres around the Island State to raise \$10,000 for the disabled. And Pat Farmer, Rotary Club of Granville, has become world famous for running across continents.

The means of raising funds are as varied as the community projects they support. But even as they devise bigger and better fund-raising schemes, Rotarians are reminded that fund-raising is not, or should not be their major preoccupation. The main task of every club in its community service program is to identify genuine needs and show community leadership in meeting them; mobilising local resources of talent, labour and money to complete their task.



Professor Terry Dwyer of the Menzies Institute, Hobart, Tasmania, is pictured at work with one of his research assistants. Professor Dwyer's team was one of the first to record a breakthrough in causes of Cot Death, in 1991.

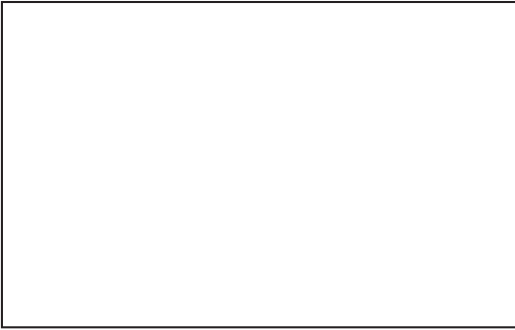


Rotary Club of Bourke's, N.S.W., wreath on war memorial cross incorporating three books, one for each of the three schools - Bourke Primary, Bourke Convent and Bourke High.

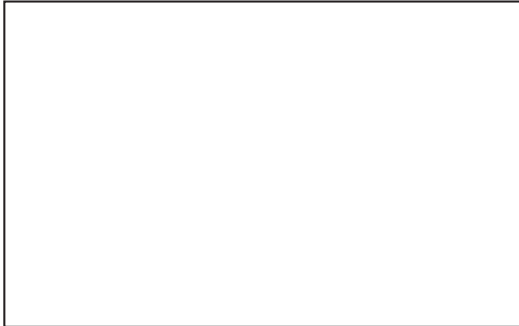


Rotarian marshalls from Districts 9680, 9690 and 9750 in New South Wales line the walls as hordes of people (more than 130,000 of them) having parted with a small fee, participate in the Tunnel Walk in 1992 to mark the opening of the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. The walk raised \$500,000 for the Royal New South Wales Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.

Right - Two great stalwarts of the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund, (from left) PDG Geoff Stevens of the Rotary Club of Hawthorn, Vic., past secretary and treasurer; and PDG Geoff Betts of the Rotary Club of Geelong, Vic., ten years on the Board and three as chairman.



Left - R.I. President 1993-94 Bob Barth unveils the first commemorative plaque to mark Rotary's involvement in the development of the Rotary Wing of the New Children's Hospital, during a visit to Sydney in 1994. Also pictured (from left) Professor David Bennett, Dr John Yu, Tom Lindsay, Project Director and Les Whitcroft (obscured), chairman Rotary Wing Committee.



Scouts and girl guides joined other volunteers in a massive clean-up after a bushfire ravaged Kings Park in the City of Perth, Western Australia. The volunteers, pictured, collected discarded tins, bottles and broken glass during the clean-up, organised by the

PDG Colin Dodds of the Rotary Club of Concord, N.S.W. (the man who made marketing the Health Research Fund an art form).

