

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

THE Rotary Peace Communities International Conference in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W., opened to grey skies and rain. The second morning saw newspaper posters of deaths by stabbing and shooting and scudding showers. The third morning dawned to the sounds of a jazz trumpet, a happy community turning out for a fun run and Old Sol beaming down sunshine.

Just as things were improving outside so were the spirits of the delegates to the conference. The culture of war has not worked for 1,000 years and the culture of peace is about to get its chance.

World events might not have turned out the way they should have at the end of the Cold War, but World War III has not happened and is seen as mutually assured destruction.

The number of conflicts has dropped to 36 internal wars, environmental degradation is being recognised as the canker leading to conflict and more people realise there is much more to the culture of peace than getting rid of weaponry.

Sometimes the institutional model had to be thrown away and a solu-



Australian Chief of Army, Lieutenant-General Peter Cosgrove, was a keynote speaker at the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference held in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. He is pictured being congratulated by District Governor 9700 Ray King after being named an honorary Peace Ambassador.

REPORTS, PHOTOGRAPHS: Jerry Carroll



1 – District 9700 Governor Elect Ed Chenery, of the Rotary Club of Bathurst, N.S.W., was invited to lunch by tireless helpers Ken Downey and Past President Kevin Warden, both of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Kooringal, N.S.W., during the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference. Inner Wheel members also assisted during the conference.



2 – Past President Neil Munro, of the Rotary Club of Coolamon, N.S.W., and Sister Joan Westblade, of the Little Company of Mary, during the conference. Sister Westblade has served people in East Timor.

tion found by exploring what was acceptable to a community.

The organisers of the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference certainly showed they understood the full embrace of the culture of peace.

The speakers and their subjects ranged from the military as peacekeepers to domestic violence, from the dangers facing aid workers to finding one's inner peace, from offenders meeting their victims and facing the consequences of their crimes to communities helping young parents.

Wagga Wagga, verdant from rains and spruced with street sculptures and lashings of plants and paint, was the natural venue for the conference.

After all, the Rotary Peace Communities idea came from there, as did the offender/victim mediation used in the restorative justice system.

Past President Tony Quinlivan, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga Kooringal, saw that Rotary could be a pathway to peace. He took his idea to the Melbourne R.I. Convention in 1993 where sufficient of the 22,000 attendees greeted it with open hearts and minds to make it a success.

To use the words of Rotary Peace Communities International Conference Convenor, Rotarian Ken Stone, the speakers "lit a flame" for the furtherance of peace.

"We have a growing concept of the culture of peace now," he said. "We have a stronger resolve to inspire others."

The Wagga Wagga Rotary Peace Communities International Conference would build on the foundations put in place by the first Rotary Peace Communities International Conference held in Los Angeles.

District 9700 Governor Ray King, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Kooringal, N.S.W., welcomed delegates from Australia, India, Argentina, Japan and the Philippines.

He said peace had to be addressed at home, in the community and the workplace as well as on the international scene. His comments after the speakers were always succinct and captured the essence for the audience.

Past R.I. President Royce Abbey, of the

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Wagga Wagga Rotary Peace Communities INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Rotary Club of Essendon, Vic., said the conference provided additional activities to latch on to by those seeking a culture of peace.

"Speakers gave us tools to act with," he said. "It has been the most stimulating conference for a long time."

District 9700 Past Governor Wal Breust, the District Peace Committee chairman, and District 9700 Past Governor Henry Gardiner, also chaired sessions effectively.

Social commentator Doctor Keith Suter, a former United Nations Australia Association president, told how conflict was returning to guerrilla warfare as large wars became too expensive to fight.

Large wars needed to be won within six weeks.

Guerrilla warfare was the result of a growing underclass and the extreme politics of hate and anger tapping into people's discontent.

He said the culture of peace meant a focus on a peaceful settlement to disputes by people coming together as partners and not enemies.

"The tree of peace has to have its roots in justice," he said.

"We need to make peace with the environment before problems get so big we will not be able to ignore them. People have to encourage governments to look at alternatives. Rotary has shown that one person can make a difference."

Dr. Suter said people needed a new mindset that would have them remembering the peace and not the war.

He drew some smiles with the McDonalds Theory of Peace. No two countries with McDonalds Family restaurants had

ever been to war. As well, no country with a free media had ever suffered famine. The reaction by other countries meant that food was given.

While Dr. Suter spoke on the international scene, two speakers addressed subject at the grassroots.

Clive Murphy, of Wagga Wagga, told how in 1987 he had lost his girlfriend and his job in a fortnight, "hitting rock bottom".

But he realised that people needed high self-esteem when things go badly and he had come back to write a book, *You Have The Power*.

People who depended on others for how they feel were not in control of their lives. He had achieved inner peace, a skill that was essentially needed but rarely taught. He now was able to teach other people the way to better attitudes, nurturing and happiness.

District 9750 Past Governor Peter Williams, of the Rotary Club of Sutherland Civic, N.S.W., told the conference of the service of *Hope for The Children*.

This program was enriching family life for people in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. It was planned that the program be national by 2005.

Hope for The Children was contributing to urban peace by recognising that a growing percentage of parents were working in isolation.

PDG Peter Williams said: "*Hope for The Children* provides friendship, support and parenting skills for people.

"New mothers are linked with health professionals and get practical help from the *Hope for The Children* volunteers who are in the local community.

"Volunteers remain with a family until they feel self-sufficient. Simply being able to talk is comforting."

He said the program should appeal to new Rotarians and that such programs were ways to forge alliances with other service organisations, Local Governments and the corporate sector.

"They can lift the image of Rotary," he said.

"There is no such thing as staying the same. You either strive to get better, or you allow yourself to get worse."

1 – R. I. Past President Royce Abbey, Mrs. Clare King and District 9700 Past Governor John Clough, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorinal, N.S.W., at the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. Royce Abbey was a keynote speaker, Mrs. King embroidered numerous banners presented to honorary peace ambassadors and PDG John moved the thanks after Royce Abbey's address.

2 – Children from the Wiradjuri Community in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W., danced a welcome to delegates to the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference at the opening session of the three-day event.

3 – District 9700 Past Governor Wal Breust, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorinal, N.S.W., and Conference organiser Ken Stone, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga Sunrise, N.S.W. with author and guest speaker Steve Pratt, centre, at the Peace Communities International Conference in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

4 – District 9700 Governor Ray King, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorinal, N.S.W., Mrs. Kay Hull, federal MP for Riverina, and social commentator Doctor Keith Suter at the Wagga Wagga Rotary Peace Communities International Conference.

Speakers open minds to a culture of peace

The Rotary Peace Communities Conference had opened the minds of people to find solutions to obstacles facing world peace.

This was happening at the time when Australia was examining its defence policy and had developed a maturity toward its role in world peace, world leaders were meeting in New York to discuss peace and people were bound closely now by technology, transports, communication, travel, science and world markets.

These advances should help to overcome obstacles to peace, but they were not a guarantee.

Tensions were serious in today's world and the stakes were high. Terror was a tool used indiscriminately and many nations were led by men who exploited their citizens for personal gain.

However, through all this, people could see that a bright future for peace was conceivable, if not inevitable.

Past R.I. President Royce Abbey, of the Rotary Club of Essendon, Vic., made these points in delivering the Royce Abbey Inaugural Peace Address at the Rotary Peace Communities Conference.

He called on delegates to squeeze substance from the three days of discussion and continue the good work already done.

Leaders in government, the United Nations and major corporations should be urged to help find solutions to bring about a culture of peace.

The industrialised world could assist developing nations to avoid internal conflicts. People who had to fight for food saw a better life ahead by taking up arms whereas support for employment, education and a lowering of birth rates

were ways to reduce conflict.

He was interested to hear of service at the grassroots in moving the world toward a culture of peace. A reskilling of people in their home countries was important to peace.

He then announced that the Royce and Jean Abbey Fellowship for 2001 had been awarded to Emilyn Kopania of Wewak, Papua New Guinea.

From the Mercy College, she is in charge of agriculture at Yarapos High School at Wewak. The school is self-sufficient in vegetables and meat production.

Her work was highly commended by the University of Goroka School of Agriculture.

Emilyn will study for three months from February next year at the University of Melbourne, Vic., and at three regional campuses.

At Dookie she will visit farms and liaise with teachers involved in pig, horticulture and rice production. At Longerenong she will study poultry farming. At Werribee she will visit institutions involved in food processing.

Emilyn will visit Rotary clubs in Victoria and Papua New Guinea as part of the program.

The fellowship is through The Rotary Foundation and the The Crawford Fund.

If peace seemed a dream, Royce Abbey said, then people should look to PolioPlus. That seemed an impossible dream but now it was close to reality.

Concluding, he said that Rotary was close to the action in changing people's lives for the better. Now awareness had been created about the culture of peace, that resource should be tapped for further action.



GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Wagga Wagga Rotary Peace Communities INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



Terry O'Connell of Real Justice Australia was recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow during the International Peace Conference. He is pictured at left being congratulated by District 9700 Governor Ray King.

Photograph: Courtesy, J. and C. Photographics, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

People must be allowed to tell their story

People calling for stronger penalties were asking for more of the same of a system that was not working.

Terry O'Connell put this proposition at the Rotary Peace Communities Conference.

He said an obsession with punishment and life in a blame culture would mean society would always have violence.

It was better to focus on showing an offender the impact of a crime on the individual and the wider community.

"More of the same" denied the humanity of what had happened and that crime is an emotional experience.

Terry O'Connell was 29 years in the N.S.W. Police and one of the pioneers of the restorative justice system which began in Wagga Wagga. The present mayor of Wagga Wagga, Kevin Wales, was a police commander in 1991 and another pioneer of the system which sought a more effective way of dealing with juvenile crime.

The system now is employed in New South Wales, South Aus-

tralia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and overseas. It is also used in schools and overseas.

Under the system of Juvenile Justice Centres the offender and the victim meet and the crime, why it happened and its impact are discussed with a free exchange of emotions.

"The value of letting people tell their stories must never be under-estimated in the resolution of conflict," he said. "All people have the right to say what had happened to them."

Terry O'Connell said that in his work in the United States he had found offenders who had not realised that their wrongdoing had affected the lives of their parents.

Describing violence as the voice of the unheard, he said people today were living in a time of great change. The social glue had been weakened and Governments had become less responsive to social needs.

Being listened to and being heard built effective relationships and a civil society focussed on that.

Getting the message across on violence against women

Getting the message about prevention of violence against women across in a wide area with insular centres called for some imagination. The approaches used however had to fit into a state strategy as the area, Greater Murray, was one of 17 regions in New South Wales.

So the people with the task of spreading the message looked to a campaign using stickers and refrigerator magnets.

Delegates to the Rotary Peace Communities Conference heard this from Annette Laurie and Karen McLean of the Greater Murray Regional Reference Group in the N.S.W. Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women. Stickers went up on toilet doors, cash registers and in shop windows. Magnets were sent to women on the land by mail. Town entry and service club signs also were sites for information.

Hotels, the taxi industry and sporting clubs were involved in the program by having better lighting, access to telephones and men's groups saying no to violence against women.

In this way "non-traditional players" became involved in creating awareness of the problem and provided more information for victims.

Natural leaders in the communities served were asked to create awareness that violence against women was not only a women's problem.

The speakers said that drunkenness was not the main reason for violence toward women. Violence was about exerting power and control over others.

Sick children can't learn

"SICK children can't learn" was one of the messages from Sister Joan Westblade, of the Little Company of Mary, who served in East Timor as a relief co-ordinator. She said people might think that the emergency was past, but not a lot had changed for the "little people". While they were not starving, they did remain hungry and were still recovering from assaults on their villages. Literacy programs in their own language were being undertaken and for children to make best use of these they needed to be healthy. Therefore, a food program was integral. Farming tools were needed so that people did not become dependent on relief supplies. Sister Westblade said: "The great thing is that they are free. Many East Timorese are farmers and all they want is peace. People have lost everything and had no time to grieve, but are emerging for the long struggle ahead. Nature promises to restore some things as the coffee crop looks likely to be good." Help with health programs was coming from New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania. Low wages being paid to East Timorese and stores with articles priced out of the reach of most people were of concern to Sister Westblade. She said a choir from East Timor would tour N.S.W. soon.

Reconciliation needs goodwill, patience

RECONCILIATION was a process that called for people to come together in goodwill, Pastor Cec Grant, a Wiradjuri Council of Elders member, told the conference. He spoke after a welcome dance by young Wiradjuri people. They were



Faith in doctors and now faith in peace

People attended from across the seas when the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference was held in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. Pictured are Dean of the Peace Ambassadors, Past President Geoffrey Little, Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Councillor Kevin Wales, Patricia Baigros, of Argentina, Emmy Ortiz, of the Philippines, Shanti Eddy, of India, Australian Chief of Army Lieutenant-General Peter Cosgrove, and Motonobu Nishimura, of Japan.

Rotarian Shanti Eddy from India has placed her faith in Australia twice. The first was 15 years ago when she accompanied a sick child to Australia and the second was when she became part of the Rotary Peace Communities. She travelled from India to Wagga Wagga in the south of New South Wales to attend the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference. From Chennai in southern India, Shanti Eddy said the friendship of Australians made it a different world. "Australians are a peace-loving people and started a wonderful thing in the peace communities," she said. "Just as I placed my confidence and trust in the doctors in Syd-

ney those 15 years ago, I am placing my trust in this project. I believe it will continue to spread." Patricia Baigros, who attended from Buenos Aires in Argentina, has translated information on Rotary Peace Communities into the Spanish language. Dean of Peace Ambassadors, Geoffrey Little, of the Rotary Club of Wollstonecraft, N.S.W., said more than 30 centres were now involved, Manila in the Philippines being the springboard to the project becoming international. He was pleased that during the conference more people had been made peace ambassadors to spread the project's message.

when food and literacy programs do not jell . . .

drawn from schools at Mount Austin, Tolland, Ashmont and Henschke. Clapping sticks were played by Eddie Whyman and a didgeridoo by Vincent King. Pastor Grant said that reconciliation would continue for some time as people sought solutions to problems. "The Wiradjuri way is not to be in a hurry, but to be patient and respectful," he said. He urged all delegates to continue their striving for peace saying: "Peace in your heart is a wonderful state of mind." Pastor Grant was joined in his welcome by Elvira Whighton, another Council of Elders member.

Different mindset since becoming an MP

SINCE becoming a Member of Parliament, Federal MP Kay Hull has adopted a different mindset of the way the world functioned. She said this at the opening session of the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. She was finding in her work people who were hostile and angry and disquiet. It was important for people to have attitudes of peace in solving conflicts. "The more peace communities the better the world will be," she said. "I am proud that the Rotary Peace Communities project was initiated in Wagga Wagga, a district that had become home to people of many different nationalities." She commended Rotary, its volunteers and the willingness to play a role in community life.

Reconciliation through environment

DICK Green, regional officer for Greening Australia, told of a

reconciliation project at Bald Hill, Wagga Wagga. He said reconciliation fitted the Rotary theme as it was about creating awareness and taking action. Australians should be proud of the differences of culture and be richer for it. Cultures might be different, but they had universal stories, Dick Green said, citing Romeo and Juliet and Running Bear and Little White Dove. As Aboriginal people were custodians of this land, the Bald Hill project could be seen as environmental reconciliation. The project could look to past indigenous culture, the present and into the future. There would a reconciliation walking track and an education viewing area. Although land had been cleared and grazed, a symbolic array of stone formations and local native vegetation remained within view from Bald Hill. Dick Green said that the turnout of 500 people in Wagga Wagga for Corroboree 2000 in May had empowered the media and many people to a more positive outlook toward reconciliation. The day the march was held snow had fallen in Wagga Wagga for the first time in 58 years, he said.

Resettling in regional centres has success

ONE delegate, Erwin Richter, told the Rotary Peace Communities Conference that a Community Refugee Settlement Scheme had been operating in Wagga Wagga for many years. He knew of more than 50 families who had made the city their home. People were living in Wagga Wagga who came from Bosnia, Africa, Iraq and Kurdistan under the scheme.



Photograph: Courtesy, J and C Photographics, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

Peace the healer can come through easing

Peace is a healing process and a noble goal that could be reached through the alleviation of poverty and the spread of education.

R.I. Past President Glen Kinross, of the Rotary Club of Hamilton, Queensland, said this in his address to the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

“Peace is a treasure that eludes many,” he said. “We are all here because we seek peace and we see Rotary International as an instrument for peace.

R.I. Past President Glen Kinross, addresses the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference.

“With more than a million members Rotary is a world in miniature that covers every culture and creed. Day in, day out Rotarians are serving for peace in 162 countries.

“Rotarians have achieved what politicians have failed to do.”

Describing poverty and the hunger it brings as the No.1 enemy of peace, R.I. Past President Glen said food was a bond for humanity. There would be little peace while bellies were empty.

“That we can’t feed the world is not the issue,” he said. “The planet can provide the food. We limit production or have surpluses and millions suffer.

“The distribution of bullets has been overcome, but we find the distribution of food impossible.”

On better learning as a way to peace, R.I. Past President Glen said many people could look back on their lives and see that education had made them successful.

“The mind is a terrible thing to waste. I wonder how many new Pasteurs, Einsteins and Flemings there are out there waiting for their potential to be released through education.

“To leave people trapped in illiteracy is a vote for continued poverty and a world of haves and have-nots.”

Having some living in elite

Lessons learnt from East Timor experience

Lieutenant-General Peter Cosgrove, who led the International Force to East Timor (INTERFET), told of the rapid deployment of the force and what had been learnt.

The Australian Chief of Army, Lieutenant-General Cosgrove was the last speaker in the three-day Peace Conference and attracted an audience of more than 450 conference delegates and district residents.

He took part in an extended question time and with Mrs. Cosgrove attended a morning civic reception and a dinner.

Lieutenant-General Cosgrove said the mandate for the intervention force came on September 15 last year and by September 20 two infantry battalions and some armour were in East Timor.

His conviction was that the intervention force led by Australia was more rapid in build-up than Blue Berets from the United Nations could have been because of the complex bureaucracy of the United Nations.

In Australia, some people had bemoaned that Australia had not led intervention earlier.

This was ignoring the fact that a mood had to exist for such an event to take place. All of Australia had to be persuaded that it was right.

Lieutenant-General Cosgrove said although the operation was not faultless the nation’s international reputation had been enhanced.

The operation favoured a regional action and it was worthy of further study.

A need for more linguists to be involved had emerged, Lieutenant-General Cosgrove said.

Troops were down to sign language among the different nations involved.

“This is OK in routine matters, but in serious conflict that does not cut it. We would have been challenged if the tempo of operations had been uniformly high,” Lieutenant-General Cosgrove said.



Wagga Wagga Rotary Peace Communities INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

He said it was important in such an operation not to alienate coalition partners. Truly cultural events were important, providing an insight into the psyche of the coalition partners. Australia’s contribution had fallen on Melbourne Cup Day.

Lieutenant-General Cosgrove said the International Force had involved 21 nations and represented a new wave in peace-keeping.

There was true burden-sharing and information-sharing with “accurate, pithy and quick” reports going to 21 national capitals and New York.

While the International Force was for peace-keeping it had to be sufficiently strong to deter the opponents of independence in East Timor not to become too adventurous.

The International Force had a back-up of sea power with ships providing “floating warehouses, repair shop and petrol supplies”.

Lieutenant-General Cosgrove praised the work of the force and the logistic support, saying the outcomes had been professional and skilful.

“I have vivid memories of an operation of great complexity helping East Timor in its hour of need,” he said.

There had been a low casualty rate, Indonesia had a clear view of what was happening and issues had been talked through.

“The Indonesian military leaders wanted to avoid the same things as I wanted to,” he said.

On the media coverage of the intervention, Lieutenant-General Cosgrove said scrutiny of the force’s behaviour had been invited so people could judge for themselves.

“A headline can be just as damaging as a bullet,” he said.

Lieutenant-General Cosgrove said the presence of the International Force would be needed for some time as East Timor was rebuilt from scratch.

During the Peace Conference, Lieutenant-General Cosgrove was recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow with a sapphire pin.

poverty and educating people



luxury and others suffering could only breed jealousy, hatred and violence.

In the year 2000, there were still 38 countries in the world that did not have compulsory education.

“Rotary clubs have taken a positive step toward world peace through literacy and numeracy programs,” R.I. Past President Glen said. “Through our programs we must persuade nations to upgrade their systems of education.”

He said that The Rotary Foundation through its Ambassadorial Scholars and other educational programs was doing more than the Rhodes and Fulbright Scholars programs.

“Each year The Rotary Foundation project helps struggling people the way no others can,” he said. “There are low-

cost shelters for the poorest of the poor and PolioPlus is one of the most significant health programs the world has ever seen.

“Rotary does not care who it helps. It gets on with the caring and making the world a better place.”

R.I. Past President Glen expressed confidence in the future of the Rotary Centres for Peace Studies program which is being funded by The Rotary Foundation. The University of Queensland in Brisbane is one of the centres.

Thanking R.I. Past President Glen, District 9700 Governor Ray King said the message was for Rotarians to get on with the business of making a difference in the world.

He agreed that lost potential through inferior education systems was a tragedy to be countered.



Mural, essay and poster draw young

Young people showed they were interested in the culture of peace during the Peace Communities International Conference.

Schools entered a murals competition in the district and essay and poster contests drew entries from Australia, India, Japan and Mauritius.

The mural which adorns an exterior wall in the Wagga Wagga Civic Centre was painted by students of Matong Public School, a two-teacher school near Wagga Wagga.

Regional Art Gallery Education Officer Sarah Last said the students selected the way to depict peace through flowers, rainbows and animals.

“There was no mess and they finished on time,” she said.

Teacher Adele Nye was with the young painters during the project. Past President Jim Tweedle, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorlingal, was the co-ordinating artist. He also presented prizes to the essay and poster prize-winners who lived locally.

Mayor Kevin Wales, of Wagga Wagga City Council, said the mural showed young people saw peace as associated with nature, happy faces and holding hands. The programs as well as giving young people a sense of art gave them a feeling for a peaceful world.

Prizes totalling \$A5,000 for the essay and poster competition were given by ECC, an English Language Institute in Japan. The competitions also were supported by *The Daily Advertiser* and *The Riverina Leader* newspapers, Wagga Wagga Regional Art Gallery and Friends of the Gallery.

A Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA) was conducted during the second day of the conference.

Pictured: Some students from Matong Public School with the peace mural they painted at Wagga Wagga Civic Centre during the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference. They were with teacher Adele Nye, Regional Gallery Education Officer Sarah Last and co-ordinating artist Past President Jim Tweedle of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorlingal, N.S.W.

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Wagga Wagga Rotary Peace Communities INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Land mines kill a half-century after war ends

Land mines were such an insidious weapon that those laid in World World Two were killing people more than 50 years later. Building workers in Berlin, Germany, were uncovering land mines and bombs from the 1940s that were causing deaths and maiming people today. Delegates to the Peace Communities International Conference in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W., heard this and other references to the damage wrought long after conflicts had ended. Executive Director of the Australian Red Cross (N.S.W.) Paul Sullivan said land mines which had been seeded during civil war in Mozambique (1979-92) had been scattered about by severe flooding since. He praised the work of the Australian Army in teaching people how to remove land mines in their own countries. Doctor Keith Suter, the recipient of the Australian Government's Peace Medal in 1986, said that some countries would take another 20 years to clear land mines. “We will have grandparents killing their grandchildren with mines that were placed in times of conflict,” he said. Because land mines were so widespread arable land could not be cultivated for much-needed food. A huge burden was placed on limited health services when people were injured by the mines. The growing number of amputees meant a special prosthesis was needed to be designed so people could work. Doctor Suter was pleased that Rotary clubs were supporting the program DESTROY A MINEFIELD and urged other clubs to take part. Mine fields remained serious threats in Angola, Afghanistan and Cambodia as well as other countries. Steve Pratt, formerly of CARE Australia, said he was involved in land mine lifting in Yemen. The lifting team had surveyed villagers, goat herders and camel drivers getting information about land mines. The operation was sponsored by the United Nations and the Dutch Government. Steve Pratt said that the Yemen Government had stopped the land mine lifting program because the operation was challenging its sovereignty and control of its own population.

Time capsule placed, doves released at service



Past President Tony Quinlivan, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorlingal, N.S.W., who initiated the project, placed a time capsule at the Peace Monument in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

When the Peace Monument in Ivan Jack Drive was the site for an ecumenical service the spring day dawned grey and umbrellas were up early.

But the Kapooka Army Band played some icebreakers, the recording man thought positively, the sun shone through and the service went on in the open.

With Wagga Wagga in the middle of a rainy patch of weather the venue was a verdant sight, the trees and grass contrasting vividly with the red coats of the musicians.

Past President Tony Quinlivan, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorlingal, N.S.W., who initiated the project, released two white doves as a symbol of peace and placed a time capsule at the site. The capsule will be opened in 2025.

R.I. Past President Royce Abbey, of the Rotary Club of Essendon, Vic., who took part in the dedication of the memorial when Wagga Wagga was the only Rotary peace city, returned to place a wreath.

He later gave the inaugural peace address at the Wagga Wagga Civic Centre. The address was named in his honour.

District 9700 Past Governor Henry Gardiner, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorlingal, presided. A minute's silence was observed for the United Nations aid workers killed in West Timor.

District 9700 Past Governor Wal Breust, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorlingal, said Rotary Task Forces were examining crime reduction and violence prevention. The service by the task forces could only make people better aware and turn ideas into actions.

The Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, William Brennan, said that peace was the only way forward for mankind.

"Peace is Australia's greatest export," he said. "We have a special obligation to be ambassadors of peace because our country has known much peace."

He spoke of the Peace Forum which was being held in New York, U.S.A., at the same time and commended the action of world leaders in working against poverty.

"Relief from poverty is the action of a loving community," he said.

Representatives of the Anglican and Uniting Churches also took part in the service.

Past President Tony Quinlivan, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Koorlingal, N.S.W., and wife Pat received Certificates of Appreciation from Mayor Kevin Wales of Wagga Wagga City Council for their service to the community.



2001 is the United Nations Year of the Volunteer

Executive Director of the Australian Red Cross (N.S.W.), Paul O'Sullivan, said the year 2001 would recognise that volunteers made humanitarian efforts work.

It will be the United Nations Year of the Volunteer and he was hopeful that the theme could be wrapped into the Centenary of Federation celebrations in Australia.

Volunteers made significant contributions for good against significant odds. These contributions came in conflicts, earthquakes, floods, droughts, bushfires and drug abuses.

"Dispossessed and vulnerable people need people of goodwill to reach out," he said. "We have seen the power of humanity at work in Australia through the assistance to people in East Timor and *Operation Safe Haven* which helped more than 4,000 refugees."

Operation Safe Haven helped refugees from Kosovar and it had worked with people from various organisations and the Federal Government serving together. Programs did not get the best value if there was diversity.

Paul O'Sullivan said the nature of

mankind and natural disasters meant that there would be an on-going need for humanitarian organisations.

He said missing today was a sense of corporate responsibility for the welfare of nations, but this could be changed by dip-

"A commitment to profit is understandable but there are other things to life."

ping into the consciousness of corporations.

"Knocking on doors and making an approach face-to-face does work," he said. "A commitment to profit is understandable but there are other things to life."

He said Red Cross had the world's second-most recognisable sign. The first was Coca-Cola.

Red Cross showed people the benefits of good works and in being reasonable.

Australians had been wonderfully generous, he said. Australian Army personnel had helped indigenous communities establish better water supplies in Australia and

overseas had been involved in land mine clearances.

Australian firefighters had gone to the west coast of the United States to combat bushfires there.

Paul O'Sullivan said that Red Cross faced the same problems as other service organisations in memberships.

"It is a problem without any ready solution," he said. "Red Cross membership is aging and we are looking to the 50 and 60 years old as recruits now."

"The structure of society is different with people in the 20 to 45 years age bracket in dual working families with children and mortgages.

"We have to think differently on the way we govern ourselves and our branch structure. We are looking to reach students at three levels of education.

"Red Cross may lose them from 20 to 45, but we recapture them later."

Before serving the Red Cross, Paul O'Sullivan served in the Australian Army for 35 years. He was engaged in the deployment of military contingents in peace-keeping and humanitarian projects at home and abroad.



Wagga Wagga City Council General Manager Past President Brian Andrews, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga-Sunrise, N.S.W., District 9700 Past Governor Henry Gardiner, of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga Koorlingal, N.S.W., with conference speaker Barry Thompson who is a R.I. Past Treasurer. He also heads a R.I. Sponsorship Committee and is the South Pacific Co-ordinator of Crime Reduction and Violence Prevention Task Force. Wagga Wagga City Council was a sponsor of the conference. PP Brian holds the Public Service Medal.

Cynic got it wrong with Rotary quip

George Bernard Shaw had got things wrong with his often-quoted "Rotary is going to lunch". R.I. Past Treasurer Barry Thompson, of the Rotary Club of Padstow, N.S.W., said this in his Report Card on Rotary.

"Rotary will go where needs are to be met and peace, in whatever small measure, comes closer with every action. Rotary has improved the lives of many people," he said.

Barry Thompson took delegates through the many programs of The Rotary Foundation and how Rotary projects had turned people from social outcasts into valued members of a community through health programs.

Even when a country did not have Rotary clubs assistance was available to people through Helping Grants. Some programs stressed self-help and prevention rather than cure. All looked to long-term benefits.

He said programs were as diverse as environmental programs and solar cooking ovens where fuels were scarce, to literacy and sharing research with developing nations.

The Rotary Peace Studies and a co-operative agreement with the United Nations to combat AIDs were landmark projects.

"PolioPlus is so wonderful it has been able to stop factions warring so that children can be vaccinated," he said.

"PolioPlus will bring about huge savings for countries in health care."

That peace was inherent in Rotary thinking was shown by Rotary involvement with programs to reduce urban and domestic violence and homelessness.

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A CHANCE**

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Peace Communities
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE**

East Timor intervention beacon in resolving disputes

The method of intervention in East Timor by the free world is seen as a beacon for the way ahead in resolving conflicts.

Steve Pratt made this statement when addressing a session of the Rotary Peace Communities International Conference in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

Intervention had to be fair dinkum, he contended. It needed to be robust, but fair.

The United Nations bureaucracy had become bloated and intervention in many places was in heavy seas in seeking a peace.

"We should not prolong the agony of those we are trying to help or allow those guilty of atrocities to continue their work," he said.

Steve Pratt said that the increasing danger to Non-Government organisations (NGOs) representatives was shown in his imprisonment, the taking of hostages in Sierra Leone and the deaths of United Nations personnel in West Timor.

"There is a general naivety to the dangers faced on the ground by representatives of NGOs," he said.

Steve Pratt retired from the Australian Army with the rank of major and his logistics skills saw him employed by CARE Australia for six years in world trouble

spots. He was imprisoned with fellow Australian Peter Wallace and Branko Jelen by the Yugoslav authorities on spying charges. All have been released.

Steve Pratt in his book *A Duty of Care* details his account of CARE Australia's overseas emergency work from 1993 to 1999.

His address was on the dilemmas and challenges in delivering aid in pariah states.

He said that many aid programs, though well-intended, floundered. NGOs overstretched their capacities and typical of large non-profit organisations operated on the smell of an oily rag. That was one of their weaknesses.

Steve Pratt said witnessing of conflicts by NGO representatives made their work that much more dangerous.

In Yugoslavia he had seen burning vehicles and tanks and people on the move.

These had been reported to CARE Australia, but they were not military reports. They were reports of human rights abuses and reporting that CARE representatives could not get into villages to do their work.

He had a staff of eight internationals and 150 Yugoslav staff of different ethnic backgrounds. It was important for them, to

be able to do their work, to know where minefields were and where fighting was.

Situation reports about the difficulties were written to CARE in the United States, the United Kingdom, Austria and Germany. All were NATO countries.

These reports were later used as evidence against him.

Steve Pratt said that after he was arrested he was beaten if he did not co-operate and was questioned for up to 20 hours straight.

His life was in the balance and his faith in his wife's prayers and the support of the Australian Government and communities, his family and CARE kept him going. He also praised the efforts of Malcolm Fraser, a former Australian prime minister, to secure his release.

"There is a general naivety to the dangers faced on the ground by representatives of NGOs."