

2016 – 2017



President - Stephen Taylor

Secretary - Peter van der Sleesen

Treasurer - Rod McDougall

District Governor - Stephen Humphreys

RI President - John F. Germ

RI Theme - Rotary Serving Humanity

It is my great pleasure to present my report for the last year's activities of our club.

There are programs run by Rotary Clubs and Rotarians that quite simply cannot be undertaken by any other organisation

I refer of course to:

- The Police Officer of the Year awards
- The Pride of Workmanship awards
- The Strathfield Youth awards
- the RYPEN weekend camps for leadership development
- the RYLA awards, a week of intense leadership training for young people that quite simply changes their lives forever
- the School debates, and the literature extension programs
- and not to be outdone, our club has three (3) Interact Clubs, and a newly formed Rotaract Club, which is a vehicle for the twenty somethings to contribute to society and to do good work

I am full of admiration for our members who run these programs: Arie Pappas Youth Director, Peter Smith our Interact and Rotaract coordinator, and Dr Usha Garg and Gulian Vaccari who organised some of our big vocational nights

This year we have successfully completed a "Global Grant" providing significant funds, multiplied by Rotary Foundation and Government grants to assist in rebuilding a run down old school in the slums of Mumbai in India, which now complete, will educate over 2,500 children and their parents year on year

We are very grateful to PP Ross Brown for his contribution to the club and The Rotary Foundation which made this grant possible, so early in the Rotary year

Our support for Graffiti removal continues through Peter Smith, with the club recently receiving a \$10,000 grant from West Connex for the purchase of a utility

As noted above, our club is exceptionally strong in vocational service areas with the Pride of Workmanship and Police Officer awards. This year we introduced a new vocational idea, a detailed life talk, providing extensive information on a Rotarian's early life and work instead of just talking briefly about their business. This initiative has greatly improved internal relationships between club members.

In the area of club service I believe we punch above our weight. Rotarian Bradley Ayres has done a great job with the newly renamed "spoke", as has PDG David Croft with his excellent articles on famous Rotarians, and significant events in Rotary's history. Thanks to David we are now far better educated on Rotary's history and programs

Brad and his team have (Ed Dunlop, Gulian Vaccari, Keith Byrn and Andrew Kowalski (until his untimely death last year) have also done an excellent job in arranging quality speakers, an appropriate room setup and something for us to eat. Ray McCluskie has done his usual superb job looking after our great web site and our Facebook page

This year I have endeavoured to "mix up" our meetings, by introducing "heads and tails", restaurant nights out and some off site meetings. We also had our mini Olympics night featuring our gold medal winners "The Manenti's" and then "Rio, Rugby and Rotary", a great evening celebrating Ross Brown's generosity, and John Manenti's Olympic success

Unfortunately my efforts with "the Stroller Derby" fell short, but I wish to dwell no further on this, but to say The Infant's Home is a charity very deserving of our time and donations at any time

With respect to funds distribution this year, you will find a very detailed break up from Treasurer Rod, on where the money came from and where it has been allocated

I am very pleased that we have made a substantial contribution to The Rotary Foundation, and we have committed a reasonable amount to The Infants Home, which was one of my designated charities

In addition we were able to donate a modest amount to the Cancer Council, and much needed funds to Chalmers Road special school for the purchase of iPads, as well as funds to the Catherine Sullivan Hearing centre I am very conscious that most funds generated this year were from BBQ's, and the weekly contributions from members in the Fines session, and heads and tails. Chris Virgona was also very generous in his personal donations

"Heads and tails", another new bit of fun, was expertly handled by PP Keith Byrn, and even though some of the members funds were perhaps diverted to this activity from Grahame True's Sergeants session, both activities contributed significantly to fundraising

Andrew Aravanis had a busy year with the club BBQ, and following his marathon performance at Bunnings last year, he is indeed the new "BBQ king" of Strathfield. We had BBQ's at Bunnings, Masters, at the Parkinsons' Unity walk, at a Council park in Homebush, and at our Carols evening and at Homebush West train station A big thank you to Andrew

As noted earlier in my report Youth Director Arie Pappas was very committed to his huge portfolio of Youth. The Youth awards night held only a month ago, were incredibly impressive, with every category producing amazing stories of achievement.

Rick Vosila, our International Director, and Membership Director, was very busy with a number of interesting functions that were designed to bring in new younger members. Hopefully, our postponed "Indian International night" will proceed this year. In general terms two members stand out for their involvement in all areas of the club. They are of course Rod McDougall and Peter Smith. If they haven't done it, they at least know about or know where to find it. Without these two guys' effort the club would simply not function.

A big thank you also to Domenico Alvaro for year on year making his home available to us for a winter BBQ. Domenico is a very unassuming man, but as we saw in one of our expanded life talks the "Alvaro Bros" brand has become one of the most respected building companies in the land.

In closing I just wish to make one important observation, one I learnt 40 years ago, and which I strongly believe is relevant today. Rotary is a "people" business, and it is important that those "people" or more accurately members who care about its future and the work it undertakes for humanity, must understand that you only find out about other people, and what they are doing by attending meetings regularly, and interacting with them.

Many of the people I met as a very young green Rotarian 40 years ago are still some of my closest friends today.

I simply cannot imagine a time when a Rotary Club is run by texting or email, without some form of meaningful human interaction.

Naturally membership renewal is also critical and has been acknowledged by this board with a number of new and innovative ideas put forward and tried, and I'm sure this will continue under Rick.

Finally, I wish to thank those members who were able to attend the 40 and up celebration on June 16th.

To have so many dedicated members of our club, and some others as guests, be awarded for 40 years of service or even greater, is a true testament to the power of this organisation and the dedication of these members to it. I thank them for their service and I hope it will inspire others to serve.

I think there is a great deal of truth and appropriateness in this year's Rotary theme, Rotary and its dedicated members "really does serve humanity". Thank you for the privilege of being President this year.