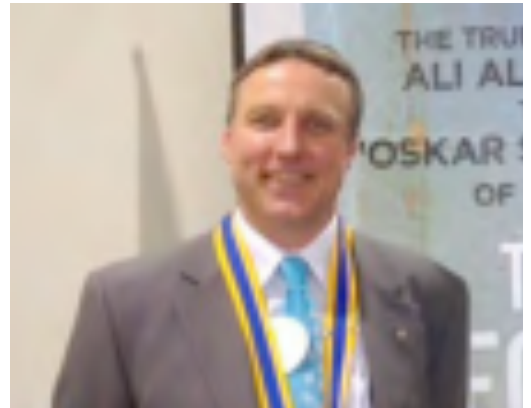


President Brian Figg 2012/13

When writing about our history, I must admit to often being really inspired by our member's stories. Brian Figg's story as President is an example of how some members endeavour to continue 'to do good in the world' at even the most challenging times in their lives.

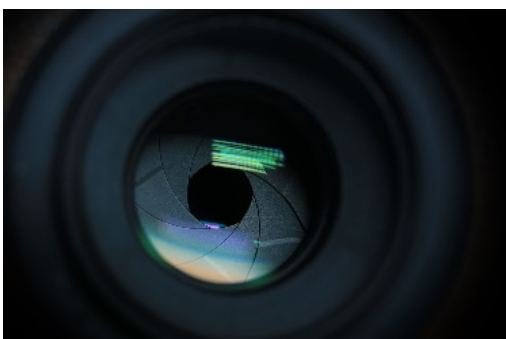
Brian Figg became President in 2012. Brian had been President of Mildura Rotary Club in 2007/08. He joined our Club in 2008 and immediately made an impression with his enthusiasm and diligent attitude. In recent years, Brian has been the coordinator for the Art Show.



When Brian became President, Brian undertook to make several changes to modernise the Club. President Brian strongly felt that the Club must keep up with the changes that had happened within the wider community. For example, Brian did away with the formal table, introduced a time for reflection at the beginning of meetings (rather than Rotary grace) and set the Club several objectives after first meeting with some of the leaders in the Club.

Brian and the committee committed to:

- Identify a project in the community where there is a real need that is not currently being addressed.
- Explore the option of having “Friends of Rotary” work with members on programs.
- Consider ways the Club can engage younger members as a part of the wider Club.
- For members of the Club to be well informed about how the Club's funds are making a difference in the local community or overseas.
- For the Club to increase more Indigenous involvement in its programs.



Despite experiencing an extremely difficult year, due to personal circumstances, Brian still worked hard to ensure all the Club's goals were achieved.

- A 'Hand's on Project' was developed to engage members of the Bendigo Gold Football Club (along with our own members) to assist in the maintenance required at Bendigo Special Development School.



Nineteen members of our Club also participated in a garden project at Lockwood South Primary School.

- The Club formed a partnership with Ray White Real Estate as a 'Friend of Rotary' with a program called: 'A Little Ray of Sunshine.' Over 50 Xmas gifts were donated to the Club to distribute to financially disadvantaged, local families.
- During the year, the Wheeler Foundation provided a \$5,000 grant for our Nepal Health Promotion Project. President Brian explored options with the possibility of engaging members in a long-term, hands-on Project in Nepal. There was already work undertaken to support a leprosy clinic where the lack of sterilisation was a real concern.
- Emma Clark, a young woman from Eaglehawk, was supported by the Club to attend a World Peace Forum in Hiroshima, Japan. Emma had written about what peace means to her in a 1,000-word essay competition. Emma had also written 2 poems on the subject.



President Brian's commitment to continue to lead the Club as President, motivated members in the Club to step up and ensure our core programs were highly successful.

- Graeme Clark and the Art Show Committee collected \$19,000 from commissions from the sale of 150 paintings, door receipts, entry fees and sponsors.

- Colin Nankervis and The Christmas Carols Committee raised \$5,000 for Homeless Youth in Bendigo.
- Glen Reilly and his committee's Operation Cleft Golf Day went to a 'Night Event' and raised \$8,000 for 32 cleft palate operations in Bangladesh.
- Mike Hughes, Wayne Smith, and volunteers raised \$10,000 from Car Parking events.



In all, \$61,000 was raised in President Brian's year to assist numerous local community organisations and Rotary programs overseas.

Brian Figg's memories as President:

A photo from one of our guest speakers, Robin de Crespigny. Robin was a memorable speaker, and many members bought her book; 'The People Smuggler.'

I introduced a different seating arrangement with no head "wedding" table, and slightly altered the meeting format to bring forward "Rotary Business" to the start of the meeting.

I replaced Rotary Grace with a Rotary Thanks, or a Rotary Reflection.

We also undertook a Rotary Club of Bendigo Strategic Plan – two sessions at the Mechanics Institute which laid the foundation for the clubs 5-year strategic plan.

I do recall wanting to do more with engaging our Aboriginal Community. We still fall noticeably short, today.





The Club, at my initiative, sponsored a delightful, young Indigenous woman, Kayla Bennett, from Cobram. We supported her with undertaking a Bachelor of Health Sciences and Masters of Paramedicine.

We also attended, and supported, a barbecue held at Bendigo Senior Secondary College. The event was in support of promoting to Indigenous Elders and the wider community, an 'Indigenous student after hours help program' available at the school.

The other topic I recall, and coinciding with Julie Sloan coming on board, was putting together the framework for the Nepal Health Promotion Committee.