

President Rod McDonald 2014-15

In all the years I have known Rod, I have always found him to be quietly spoken and incredibly respectful whenever he communicates. With a great passion for The Rotary Foundation and the work it undertakes, Rod is one of our quiet achievers in the Club. If given any role in Rotary, he will quietly go about completing the task competently and without any fanfare.



In 2014 Rod became the President of our Rotary Club. President Rod was immensely proud to be given the opportunity to lead the Club and knew very well the responsibility that came with the role. A Club, which was coming close to its 90th Anniversary, Rod valued the long-term traditions of the Club which had served it well for so many years with being the 8th oldest Rotary Club in Australia. Importantly, while maintaining the high standards that has served the Club well, Rod also undertook to make some changes that would increase fellowship and attract more members to join.

An important change occurred during Rod's year. The idea of only businesspeople, or community leaders, joining the Club was officially put to bed with the focus now with having a broad mix of people with the common goal of doing good in the world. President Rod also worked to ensure more fellowship occurred every week at meetings, not just at specific meetings.



During Rod's year, the partnership with the Namgyal Rinpoche Foundation in Nepal, resulted in tanks being installed to provide clean water for drinking and growing crops to a remote village. The crops grown would also provide a vital source of income for the villagers.



- Funds were also provided to support clinics supporting individuals with leprosy.
- Barry Penna very kindly provided wooden toys for the children living with leprosy. And,
- The Knitters' Group supplied woollen mittens and beanies for individuals living in the Kathmandu hospice to keep them warm after chemotherapy.



Our work in Samoa continued in remote parts of the country. During President Rod's year, work was undertaken in Satura. With the combination of local grants and funds from our Samoa funds, a hall was constructed next to the school. The hall would prove invaluable to the local community by providing a venue for meetings and holding specific events. Plans were also made, for the next volunteer team, to convert an unused classroom at the school into a library and to undertake general maintenance at the school.



A new sponsor for the Carols, Telstra Countrywide, added a popular segment for the night with a mobile app competition. Wonderful prizes were donated by Telstra Countrywide and Reilly's Electrical. The Bendigo Advertiser and Win Television advertising ensured a very large turnout on a beautiful evening. The compere for the night was the very popular, Bruce Roberts, from WIN Television.



During Rod's year, changes were made to the Operation Cleft Golf Event. Every hole had a shorter par 3. This proved very popular with the 22 teams that attended the event.

With the support of a major sponsor, QBE, an extraordinary \$10,000 was raised for the night which resulted in 40 children in Bangladesh undertake a cleft palate operation.



During President Rod's year the Club was acknowledged by Australia Research Health with a certificate for reaching the mark of \$500 per member in donations. Furthermore, the District gave our Club a grant of \$2,500 for our Carols by Candlelight.



Comments from Rod McDonald:

I joined the Bendigo Rotary Club in 2007 at the invitation of the late Kevin Reilly. I had been aware of the Rotary organization as a former Apexian and when the opportunity arrived later in life I was pleased to accept. My early impressions of how a Rotary Club should function were formed from working with Rotarians of the



calibre of Hugh Wheeler, Colin Burns, Ted Rankins and others. Later, in the Role of President those lessons proved of immense value when attempting to retain some of the formality of meetings in a changing environment.

Highlights of year 2014-15 for me included working with an enthusiastic Board whose efforts secured an Excellence report from ADG Greg Noonan. To quote Greg “The club has a real can-do attitude and a strong and passionate membership. It’s support of the Paul Harris Society, it’s involvement in community service projects, many vocational services, it’s international projects such as Nepal and Samoa and Youth have made a lot of difference to people’s lives and enhanced the reputation and image of Rotary. “

Other highlights included the recruitment of five new members who are still active members of the club today, a move to weekly email communication to members re meetings, continuing an ongoing relationship with Australian Rotary Health and receiving due recognition for same. A visit from DG Murray Verso and Wife Irene carried that message. And a focus on fellowship at all meetings.

Of course, there are the Directors who handled a wide range of projects so well and received support from members who gave their time, experience, and goodwill to ‘Light Up Rotary’, the international theme for 2014-15. For the opportunity to be President of such impressive group I am and will always be thankful for the experience.

