

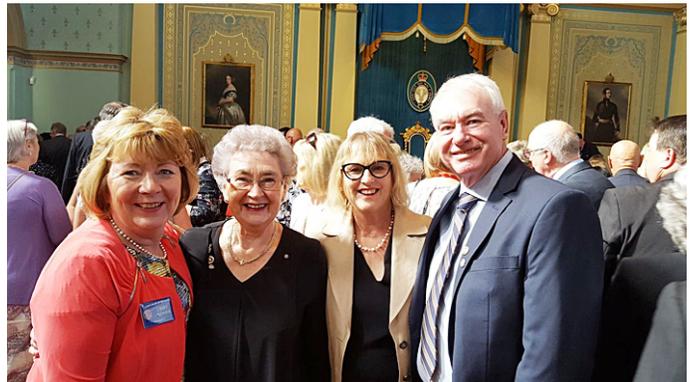
Val Broad

REFLECTIONS ON
MY YEAR AS
PRESIDENT OF
THE ROTARY
CLUB OF
BENDIGO.



The year 2017/18 began very auspiciously following a highly memorable Changeover which was held on stage at the recently opened, very beautiful Ulumbarra Theatre. Never-to-be-forgotten.

I was also delighted to be President of the Club when the World President of Rotary International was an Australian. The Governor of Victoria, the Hon. Linda Dessau, tendered a Vice-Regal Civic Reception held at Government House, to honour Mr. Ian Risely's appointment, and, together with three other Rotarians, I was able to attend this very prestigious event.



Within the week I was in New York as my choir, the Bendigo Youth Choir, had been invited to sing at Carnegie Hall. I had organised my year and felt confident that, on my return, we would bounce out of the starting block with enthusiasm. However, such was not to be. Unfortunately, shortly after I arrived home I was involved in a motor accident and out of action for the next couple of months.

Despite this, the things I had put in place were moving thanks to the calibre of the committees of the Rotary Club of Bendigo and the 12-months was an extremely active and productive time for our Club.

Highlights are always a personal choice, and those I mention are those which I feel exemplified my plans for the on-going health and development of the Rotary Club of Bendigo.

Our Carols by Candlelight presentation has been a very successful and well-loved event. It is free to the Community and this year was our 47th Presentation. Although a free event, because we are a Service Club, we take the opportunity to ask our patrons for a voluntary donation and the proceeds are donated to a worthy charity. I chose the Uniting Christmas Appeal and we were able to contribute \$3,500 to assist with their work with underprivileged people in our community. I have been involved with this presentation in several ways throughout the entire 47 years so it is very close to my heart.



The 50th Annual Art Show was another successful, well patronised event. Held over the Easter weekend, we raised \$30,000 for distribution to deserving causes and the quality of the work displayed was of an extremely high standard.

The Music and Memory Program was introduced. As this was my project for the year, it was particularly pleasing that we managed to get it off the ground, despite what appeared to be a disaster. The Arts Health Institute from which we purchased the program went into liquidation.

This did not impact on one facility which instituted the program, but another was caught in the middle and did not receive all the equipment for which they had paid. Whilst appearing to be a tragedy, it has given us the

opportunity to devise our own program which has been delivered, voluntarily, through my Bendigo Youth Choir Associate, Gail Godber.

Our Youth Committee, under the direction of Joy Bruce, also offered many wonderful opportunities to young people. We hosted Laura Zeuner from Germany; we provided a Foundation Scholarship Grant to two students at Catherine McAuley College, and sponsored young people to the NYSF and RYPEN programs.

I think that my favourite project for the year was our Basketball Project. The Club was given a large number of surplus basketballs, thongs, sports bags and singlets for distribution outside of Victoria. Many children in outback areas were recipients of these goods and pallets went to Miltaburra near Ceduna, to Nhulunbuy and the Drought Angels in Chincilla. Photographs of the children when they received this sporting equipment were full of great joy and gave us all so much pleasure. A truly great project with thanks to Bob Edgar, Peter Hyett and Tom Dobeli who ran with this. They used a network of businesses outside of Rotary which proved to be wonderful relationships.

As well, our Club received laptop computers from Merck Sharp and Dohme (MSD) and we sent those to our projects in Samoa and Nepal. A few required some work, and they were donated to Crusoe College where they were repaired and given to needy students.

So many other projects – Julie Sloan' ' rode the Peninsular' on her bike through drizzling rain to raise funds for End Polio Now; we provided and filled bags with toiletries and gave them to homeless people through 'Share the Dignity', including bags for men and children; helped at the Wool and Sheep Show' gave needy children a present at Christmas through our 'Giving Tree'; were involved in the Food and Fibre Centre of Excellence at TAFE; donated hundreds of exercise books, pens and pencils to send to Samoa; been involved in a 'self-help' program in Nepal to help eradicate leprosy (Hansen's Syndrome); collected and are continuing to collect used stamps to help fund the End Trachoma in Australia by 2020 project – and

we held our first Autumn Market in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Strathdale.

The Rotary Club of Bendigo and the Bendigo Youth Choir further cemented a wonderful relationship which has existed for many years. The performance in Carnegie Hall was made possible by generous donations from the Rotary Club of Bendigo, with additional grants from the Rotary Foundation.



As a result of this close liaison, two of the young choristers were invited to sing at the 2018 Rotary International Presidential Peace Conference held in the Sydney Town Hall. Another instance of Rotary giving young people opportunities they would not otherwise receive.

'Highlights' does not really describe the sadness we experienced during the year – but, for me,

I will never forget that our member Umesh and his lovely wife Jesmin lost their beautiful little daughter, 5-years old Brishti - from an aggressive form of brain cancer.

We were devastated and I organised for a commemorative plaque, donated from the Rotary Club of Bendigo, to be placed in the ward where she lost her life at the Royal Children's Hospital.

Bev Figg, our much-valued member, also passed away after a long, courageous battle, and another member, Barry Ackerman, lost his beloved wife, Joyce. Our 'We Care' Committee was terribly busy this year as we supported our members who were struggling with severe illness, bereavement, and personal problems.

And – of course, we did not neglect fellowship. We had fun at our Annual Golf Night, our Bowls night, a bar-b-que at the lovely property of member

Andrew and Heather Hampton, an Italian night, and the final Great Penna Breakfast.

The Rotary Club of Bendigo is comprised of people, men and women, from greatly differing backgrounds, all of whom have a desire to help their community. They unstintingly volunteer their services. Not mentioned above are the many individual acts of generosity from our members.

Because of the wide range of professions, as a group, we can really 'make a difference'. We have adopted the catchphrase - 'People with a Purpose' and we live that out through our contribution to the wonderful, world-wide organisation to which we all belong – Rotary.

I am proud to be a Rotarian and I am particularly proud to be a member of the Rotary Club of Bendigo.

8th July, 2020.