



## 2022-2023 Peter Reading

In 2022 the most popular film was The Batman, starring Robert Pattinson, Zoe Kavitz and Jeffrey Wright. The most popular song was Kate Bush with 'Running up a Hill.' In 2022, it was also the year that the owner and director of Bendigo Signarama became the new President of the Rotary Club of Bendigo.

I have known Peter from when he first joined Rotary in 2001, and I have always been impressed with his passion with respect to

everything he undertakes in his life. His passion for Rotary became evident with respect to how he promoted Rotary in the community. Not only would he ensure the Rotary Club had the absolute best available signage to advertise all its events, but his ongoing willingness to volunteer at these events contributed to their success. It came as no surprise to any one when he was asked to become the 98<sup>th</sup> President of the Rotary Club of Bendigo.

***We must remember that it was only two years since the Covid Pandemic began. While we were not out of the Pandemic, many restrictions were lifted at this time.***

Despite having a detailed plan with what he wanted to immediately achieve for his year, President Peter's priority from October was to support the flood damaged, Rochester community. Rochester experienced its worse flood in history. The Campaspe River broke its banks and approximately 2,500 homes were affected. The Club provided funds, blankets and volunteers to assist



the community of Rochester. The Star-thrower program also hosted 22 women affected in the community with a break at Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff. Peter also supported a men's day out in Shepparton for some of Rochester's men.

President Peter also understood the importance of putting fun into Rotary during the year with creative ways to increase fellowship. For example, there was a Beer Tasting event at the Kennington Tavern and a Lunch and Gin Tasting Event at Urban Cellars. Both events proved popular with those that attended.

Since the Pandemic began, the Carols by Candlelight had not been able to be held. The Rotary Club and the community were overjoyed with the news that The Carols would continue this year. Despite the good news, President Peter was a pragmatist and clearly understood the cost of running this popular family event comes with a substantial financial cost to the Club as a whole. To assist with costs for this important event, President Peter was able to secure sponsorship from Bendigo Bank to lessen the impact it would have on Rotary funds.



Apart from bringing the Carols back to the community to lift the spirits of residents, President Peter was also aware of the financial strain many residents were experiencing. Consequently he sought volunteers to not only to assist with a collection of donated food for Foodshare but also with the distribution of food for residents over Xmas and the New Year.



In recent years, the Club has become more and more dependent on raising funds from managing parking at events at the Bendigo Jockey Club. With a concern that the average age of our membership was increasing every year,



President Peter bit the bullet and engaged the support of another Rotary Club (Bendigo South) and Friends of the Kilmore Rail Trail to assist at Car Parking Events ensuring we have enough personnel. Despite having to share funds, \$20,000 was raised during the year from such Events.

President Peter oversaw the change of 'The Annual Golf Event', held to raise funds for Operation Cleft, to a Lawn Bowls event. Importantly, ensuring a



greater involvement of our membership participating while still raising significant funds for this worthwhile cause. The annual Bowls Event has proved to be a popular decision given the support it receives. A total of \$10,000 was provided for the important humanitarian work during his year.

President Peter had many years experience running a successful local business and this is clear with his enthusiasm for the idea he had in the future for the Club to form a group strategy to ensure the Club can continue remaining active in the future despite an ageing membership.