

Rotary Club of Bendigo History - 2008-09

President: Noel Hobley

District Governor: Jim Studebaker, RC North Balwyn

Rotary International President: Dong Kurn Lee, RC Seoul Hangang

**Rotary
International
Theme:**



President Noel Hobley took the reins of the Rotary Club in 2008. He was very well known in the Bendigo community undertaking prominent roles with The Bendigo Advertiser and later, at The Bendigo Weekly.

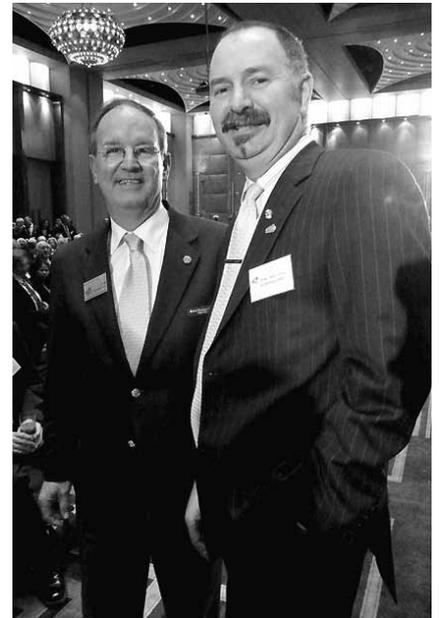
I only met Noel when he first joined Rotary. The one thing that always stood out in my mind, about Noel, was the great respect he always held for all the long-term Rotarians of the Rotary Club.

The year earlier, PP Hugh Wheeler had begun a new program call Pathfinder. The idea of the project was to encourage newer members of the Club to develop their passions and find ways to become more involved in Rotary. When Membership Director, Glen Reilly, came up with the idea of resurrecting Golf Day's as a fundraiser for the Club, this was seen by both President Noel and Glenn as an excellent vehicle to involve newer members of the Club to immediately have a positive impact.



It was decided that the Golf Day would be a positive way to raise money to improve the lives of children living in Bangladesh that are born with a cleft palate. In its very first year, the Golf Day raised \$8,000 which paid for 40 operations. Today, the Golf Days have continued, changing the lives of hundreds of lives in Bangladesh.

The Bendigo Christmas Carols is without doubt, one of the most popular annual events on the community calendar. Many long- term residents of Bendigo will inform you that they can remember attending the event as children. The event, which attracts 1,000's of residents each year, began in 1970. During President Noel's year, he was able to bring the Carols back to Rosalind Park after it had to be transferred to Lake Weeroona, 5 years earlier. Numbers attending, as a result, dramatically rose in President Noel's year as Rosalind Park had always been the most popular site for the Carols.



Jim Studebaker at left and Noel Hobley

Black Saturday hit Victoria in February 2009. Much of the State was burning. Locally, the fire burned through Long Gully and Eaglehawk. It came within 2 km of central Bendigo.

With 61 homes destroyed and the loss of one resident, President Noel did not hesitate to release Contingency Funds the Club held for emergencies to assist both communities.



The Rotary Club had started providing funding for free Rural Health Checks for residents since 2007. During President Noel's year, the popularity of the program had grown dramatically.

Member Kay Graves, from Bendigo Community Health, spoke at the National Forum in Cairns about the possibility of the program developed here in Bendigo, going National.

During President Noel's year, The Star Thrower Project, started by PP Larrie Winzar, was presented to the Rotary Beachside Cluster as a partnering opportunity to grow the program.

The Traffic Project funds grew, providing \$6,500 in revenue. Also, with President

Noel's encouragement and Bryan McMahon as chair, The Art Show, resulted in a 50% increase in sales.

As a result of the financial success of fundraising during the year, the Bendigo Youth Choir were able to be supported to perform in Prague.

Also, local organisations such as Righteous Pups and The Bendigo Resource Centre received significant funds.

President Noel also ensured it was a fun year with members enjoying a wonderful time at the Barn at Bickley's. Also, a river cruise and lunch the Tramboat on the Maribyrnong River!



Women in Rotary making a positive contribution to the lives of Australia's rural women... one day at a time; one woman at a time.