

Geoffrey McLeod 1997/98



When Geoff undertook to take the reins of the Bendigo Rotary Club, he was very clear with respect to his objectives. Apart from increasing membership (with a focus on younger and female members) Geoff knew much more could be achieved in our local community and internationally, if all 6 Rotary Clubs of Bendigo developed a cooperative spirit. The result would not only be more funds available for a single, major, local community project, but much more could also be achieved

on an international project. Furthermore, if the clubs clearly demonstrated a cooperative spirit, other funding bodies (e.g., The Rotary Foundation) would be more conducive to contributing extra funds.



Firstly, Geoff needed to investigate and explore whether his objectives with respect to developing a cooperative spirit among all the Bendigo clubs was achievable. For example, would the other Rotary Clubs in Bendigo be willing to establish a joint committee with respect to the wonderful work of ROMAC? Apart from such cooperation ideas, Geoff also was keen to explore the possibility of establishing a Rotary Community Chest of funds. Whether such funds could then become a Tax-Deductible Charitable Fund and be open for the public to also donate funds?



Remarkably, during the year, Geoff was able to ensure a spirit of cooperation began between all the Bendigo Rotary Clubs with all the Presidents agreeing to meet monthly. As a direct consequence of these meetings, a major community project was developed with the building of a Home for Homeless Youth in Bendigo. Furthermore, funding from all the clubs resulted in an Adventure Playground being built at Lake Weeroona and a Driving School at Longlea. Even to this



day, Presidents of all the clubs meet regularly looking for opportunities to undertake joint projects in the areas of Youth, Foundation, and International Projects. As Geoff highlights in his Annual Report: ***The Bendigo Rotary Clubs have created a shining example to other clubs in the District and other Rotary Districts. It illustrates what can be achieved with a very focused approach to cooperation.***



During the year, Geoff introduced the “We Care” Committee (headed by Larrie Winzar) which has proved to be an invaluable asset to the club for many years. The idea of the committee, according to Geoff, was to: ***‘hold out the hand of compassion, friendship to our members and generally help in their time of need.’***

ROMAC was given an invaluable boost of funds during the year. A ROMAC calendar was produced to ensure the sale of the calendars each year, would be directed to the important work of ROMAC. Despite a forced change of venue for the Art Show, funds rose to \$13,500. The Dinner Auction raised more than \$19,000 and the Carols, more than \$3,000. Overall, more than \$53,000 was raised from fundraising during the year.



Locally, organisations that were assisted during the year were: The Salvation Army, Mirridong, Royal Women’s Hospital, Bendigo Base Hospital (with vital equipment) and Sternberg Lodge.

Internationally, apart from funds to ROMAC, Rotartanks were sent to Samoa and Tonga; computers to Bangladesh; and aid given to the E.N.T Team in Tonga.

12 new members joined the club and most importantly, from a financial point of view, the club were no longer a 25% partner to The Easter Fair.



Back row: (left to right): Barry Ackerman, Larrie Winzar, Norm Phillips, Gail Robertson.
Front row: (left to right): Ian Monotti, Daryl Watts, Geoff McLeod, Colin Nankervis, Ron Poyser.
Inset: Janette Ball.