

2015-16: Larrie Winzar 91st President

Before President Larrie formally took the reins, another long-term member had been chosen to be President for our 91st Year.

Charlie Martin, a member I admired and respected (as all members did) fell very ill before the Rotary year began. Larrie, who undertook to be President in our 76th year, did not hesitate to jump in at the very last minute to fulfill the role of President in Charlie's absence.

If I needed someone to sell ice-creams to Eskimos, or to sell hot coffee to people living on the equator, I would not hesitate to ask Larrie to work her magic and take on the challenge. Larrie knows not only how to motivate individuals, but even a large crowd. As a public speaker, Larrie can have her audience eating out of the palm of her hand.

In our 91st year, President Larrie completed a very successful and memorable year.



Highlights

Larrie's focus at the start of the year was on increasing membership and caring for all members. Larrie worked hard on ensuring meetings were more inviting for the purpose of attracting new members to join. At the end of the year, 14 new members joined the Club.

During the year, \$85,000 was distributed to Annie North Women's Refuge, Operation Cleft, the OTIS Foundation, a Women's Project in Samoa, The Rotary Foundation, and many other projects.

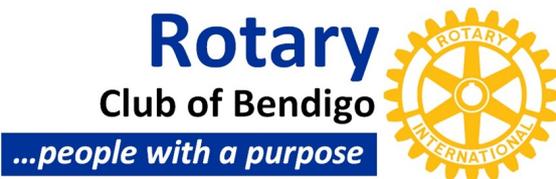
An innovative project: Operation Dog Food, was initiated and supported by new members. Their project was highlighted by Rotary Down Under on the cover of the magazine and a detailed story of the impact the program had on demonstrating to farmers that those living in the cities really were concerned for their mental health. Likewise Larrie supported a joint project with the Zonta Club of Bendigo in Showcasing Women Artisans of Central Victoria (SWAV) to raise funds to advocate for women in need. It was the first time that professional women artisans were together in the one place with their beautiful and diverse art and they loved it.



A 90th year celebration of our Club was held in the Capitol Theatre. Glenn Reilly led a brilliant celebration with a large group of members from the Melbourne Rotary Club attending to replicate what their Club did in 1925 with forming our Club. At the event, a reenactment from the Bendigo Historical Society of how the club was first formed was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Also, a Rotary song, a project of Valerie Broad, Gail Godber and Valmai Harris, was sung at the event by the Bendigo Youth Choir.

Larrie took a great pride in the evolution of Club meetings where people who traditionally turned up at 1 pm and disappeared at 2 pm started arriving early to socialize and staying after if commitments allowed.

It was a big year in Bendigo where protests and rallies against a proposed mosque in the city were challenging. The club supported a “Believe in Bendigo” picnic and had photos taken with members holding yellow balloons, sending a message that the community did not tolerate racism.



Under Larrie’s guidance the club logo was updated to include the byline “People with a Purpose” and one of Larrie’s highlights was getting members together for a photograph under the statue of Marilyn Monroe which stood at the entrance to Rosalind Park during the exhibition at the Art gallery.