

## President's Annual Report 2015-2016

### **Introduction**



The past year has seen its share of astonishing successes, unexpected demands and occasional – not failures perhaps but failure to achieve the high ambitions we set.

However this Report should properly start not at the beginning of the year but three years ago when Tony McClelland accepted the Club Presidency with the determination, backed by the Board, to focus all our energies on growing and strengthening our membership.

Three years ago our Club was in decline with a diminishing and disengaged membership, an unsatisfactory weekly meeting venue and a struggle to fill the official Club roles. It was Tony's mission to reverse that position and he did.

But he and the Board knew that by focusing all our energies on membership our Club service activities – the reason that a Club like ours exists – would be compromised so this year it became time to rebuild our Avenues of Service to pass them on to Mike Midlam and the 2016-2017 team to build them even higher and better.

Of course clubs like ours are somewhat cyclical so I suspect that when Mike and his team come to pass the baton to Malcolm Braid it will be time to refocus on membership again – but that's for 2017-2018.

### The Year in Review

The core of our Club is our Avenues of Service – the services that we provide to the Community, our work with Youth, our International activities and our involvement with the workplace, our Vocational services.

Each one of those four Avenues of Service undertook a wide variety of activities in 2015-2016 but each one is built around a key commitment. Our Community service has as its central commitment Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury, Youth commits to Eagles Raps and Clarke Road School, International's prime responsibility in the past has been School for Life in Uganda and Vocation is engaged in supporting the local police of Hornsby District Command. But around these cores is a vast array of other activities:

### **Community**



Community's over-arching achievement is the Bobbin Head Cycle Classic which is run in conjunction with three other Rotary Clubs. This year the "Bobbo" raised \$72,000 for Lifeline and \$12,600 for Eagles Raps. It attracted some 1,500 riders, was conducted with no incidents and supervised by over 400 volunteers. The only word is 'astonishing' and although I do not propose to single out individuals (not least because, amazingly, **every single member of the Club was involved**) it would be remiss not to mention the contributions of Tony McClelland and Bob Elsworth who were our Club's representatives on the "Bobbo" Executive Committee.

But while the "Bobbo" rolls on our Community activities extend far beyond that. Led by Roger Desmarchelier we managed the monthly Gordon Markets (together with Turrumurra). We handed out daffodils on the Cancer Council's Daffodil Day; we collected donations for the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal; we lifted and carried at the Lifeline book fairs and sizzled sausages at the opening of the Lifeline stores. We delivered Bowelscan kits to local pharmacies and we worked with Fairfield High School Parents' Canteen to assist refugee integration. Those who attended will remember vividly the Christmas feast that the School Canteen catered for us. (pic)



## Youth



*Sally & Martyn Wynd from Eagles Raps with a student and their presentation cheque*

Linda Lam-Rohlfs took our Youth team to new heights. There was Eagles Raps of course, now well established and successful but it should give us great satisfaction to know that just a year ago, without our Club Eagles Raps would have folded and hundreds of young lives would have been thrown away. (Pic: Sally & Martyn Wynd with a student and their presentation cheque). And our on-going support for Clarke Road School is vital.

We also funded and presented Annual Citizenship Awards at High Schools in our area. We sent young students to Rotary Youth leadership programs, Youth Science Forums, Model United Nations Assemblies and, very recently, assisted a young Engineering student to volunteer for four weeks in Cambodia building a water

project for Engineers Without Borders.

Most exciting of all is the Youth Committee's new initiative – a series of education seminars for Year 10-12 students encouraging them to explore tertiary science disciplines. The first seminar last month received coverage in the North Shore Times and attracted an enthusiastic audience of young “geeks.”



*Matt tells his exciting science story*

## International

Our International program was headed by Georgina Manning. The program contributed to Rotarians Against Malaria, ROMAC and, of course, Polio Plus as well as completing the Laos Water Treatment Project that commenced the previous year with several other Clubs.

With our neighbour, Lindfield, this year we undertook a major program to install solar electricity in remote Fijian schools and Georgina instituted a new commitment – to the “Days for Girls” program and organised a special fundraiser to kick-start it.



Unfortunately much of our International planning was derailed by a shortfall in funding for the Laos water project which we had to make up and then by the natural disasters of the Nepal earthquake and the terrible Fiji cyclone. Our scarce resources were diverted to them. We provided two Shelterboxes as well as making emergency donations from the proceeds to two special fundraisers. This meant diverting resources from ‘School For Life’ however Annabelle Chauncey and Dave Everard of the School were understanding and we have committed to a major project for them in 2016-2017.

## Vocation

Our Vocational activities have presented a challenge which is so-far unresolved. In past years we have supported the police officers of the Hornsby District Command with Pride of Workmanship awards. Many other Rotary Clubs present similar awards to other Police Commands.

This year the new Hornsby Commander suggested that we consolidate all the various Rotary Clubs into one major award for the Police Northern Area with subsidiary district awards leading to the one major award. We thought that the idea was excellent but the Police Northern Area extends far beyond our Rotary



District and unfortunately the challenge of co-ordinating several Rotary clubs in three Rotary Districts has so far proved beyond us. This is one of those –not failures but failures to achieve an ambition that was, perhaps temporarily, out of reach. We’re still working on it.

Before moving on from Avenues of Service it is important to note that every one of our Avenues of Service Directors was new this year and three of them new to office-bearing positions in the Club. What’s more, three of the four – Roger, Linda and Georgina – are continuing this year under Mike Midlam. The fourth, Lindsay, has handed in Vocation for a more onerous duty, that of Club Secretary.

### Administration



Mike Midlam, President for 2016-2017, was in charge of Administration, Rotary’s fifth Avenue of Service. Under his wing was a grab-bag of administrative functions including our Speaker program, our Functions committee and our relationship management with our new weekly venue, Killara Golf Club.

The success of the Speaker program co-ordinated by Rob Hall is best judged by meeting attendance. Twelve months ago weekly attendance was in the low twenties, by mid-year it was in the mid- twenties and now we regularly pass thirty. The “buzz” in the room is palpable.

Part of the “buzz” comes from the fellowship that is part of our Club. The Functions Committee of Joy Newling and Ross Egan has delivered Trivia Nights, Theatre Nights, Movie Nights, a fascinating International Night and a memorable Christmas Party.

Not to be outdone was “Dinners for Eight” organised by our Sergeant, Malcolm Braid and the Theatre Night organised by Roger Desmarchelier as a Community activity to support a local theatre company but which he then turned into a Fiji Cyclone Appeal fundraiser.

We also participated in many joint meetings during the year, several with our shared venue partner, Lindfield where on one occasion we had a lucky debate win and on another provided them with a wine tasting of some of the worst wine ever produced. I hope they come back.

No discussion of Administration would be complete without mentioning our brilliant Koongga editor, Michael Tyler, soon to produce his last Koongga and be replaced by Tony McClelland who has a huge bar to jump. And of course, working away in the background, making sure that all things technical run smoothly, is our Website manager and technical officer extraordinary, Bob Ivey.

Finally in Administration, what was a “first” for me in all my time at Ku-ring-gai was that at the Annual General Meeting in December the audited accounts were presented on time (thank you Auditor David Forsythe) and **all** the office bearing positions for 2016-2017 were filled with enthusiastic office-holders. This is a true sign of a healthy Club.

### Membership

Three years ago this Club had thirty-two members of which less than twenty could truly be called active. We now have forty-five and no more than a handful are not regular Club participants.

During the year we lost five members; two through pressure of other commitments, two through transfers (the Cessnock Club and the Rotary E Club of Sydney were the beneficiaries) and one for other reasons. We added four excellent new members who are already proving their worth and have two prospects so superficially membership has been stable.

However this hides the fact that we know that we will lose members next year; some through illness, some through reasons that we cannot anticipate so stability is not an option. We have an exciting and vital Club that is doing great things. All each of us needs to do is to persuade one of our non-Rotary friends to join us



*Welcoming Andrew, our newest member*

for one of our excellent meetings and they will be hooked. Having fun while doing good is the greatest addictive drug in the world. Let's pass on the addiction.

### **Finance**

The unaudited accounts at the end of May show that we have spent and budgeted to spend some \$60,000 on our activities this year, not including our quarter share of the "Bobbo" which takes the total to almost \$100,000. This is some \$10,000 more than this year's income.

The balance came from drawing down on half of our Reserve Term Deposit, a decision taken by the Board and ratified by the Club at the beginning of my Presidency.

I believe that the money has been well spent and I would particularly like to thank our Treasurer, Graham Maslen, for making the spending efficient. Keeping the accounts is an unloved job but we cannot function without it. This is Graham's last year as Treasurer and I thank him for his contribution and commitment to the Club.

### **Conclusion**

Our Club simply could not survive without an efficient Secretary and I, as had Tony McClelland before me have had one of the best. Anybody who has had to wade through the interminable emails, meetings, agendas and rosters will understand when I write that my gratitude to Geoff Hungerford is beyond measure.

This has been Geoff's last year but I cannot imagine him simply resting on his oar. I'm sure the Club will find something to keep him active.

So this concludes the Report. It has been a privilege to serve such a great Club and so many great members. Thank you for making it a great year. Next year will be even better.

**Graham Timms**  
**President**  
**2015-2016**