

President's Report 2020/21

It's been a challenging year for everyone around the world and our hearts go out to those places and people who have borne the brunt of it. Bad news from the pandemic isn't hard to find. You just need to turn on the television.

The entre was experienced in Peter Comino's year as the club dealt with the shock of Covid restrictions but we did what we needed to and held firm, together to make it work at a time when many service clubs ceased to operate. We have a lot to thank Peter and the club leadership of the time combined with the courage and resilience of our members to have us in good shape and high spirits to begin the Rotary years.

Our first steps for the year were from an uncertain beginning with the first virtual change over in the club's history AND HERE WE ARE AGAIN ! Little did we know at the time it would take a 36 week break, exactly 8 months to the day (March 25th) before we were able to catch up in the flesh again at our AGM dinner at Chilled Café in Morisset and we have remained (largely) face-to-face until tonight.

I really don't want to reflect too much of the challenges, because there was so much good and opportunity to come from the experience and I sincerely hope that this will be a short-term issue.

In the first weeks of the year and after some uncertainty our last Exchange student for some time, Sam was safely delivered to Copenhagen via Doha to be met by his parents for onward travel to Sweden. Sam was a great young man who I miss along with the opportunity to share with-and-in the lives of some great exchange experiences. Youth Exchange is possibly the greatest Rotary casualty of this period.

Of course, our outgoing student Jordyn had a less than conventional year (without schooling) in Italy which she will never forget and was eventually able to get on a compassion flight home amid concerns of second wave of Italian Covid-19 in October.

We met with DG David and DGE Amanda Roach early in the year, who I want to thank along with my long-time friend and Area Governor, Craig Henningham. We are better as a club for their efforts in 2021 and beyond.

Our member survey presented the club as a progressive, compassionate, innovative and fun place which are all important traits for club who welcomed Katherine, Virginia, Bill and (tonight) Joanne. (and soon John?)

Please join me again in welcoming them all and making their experience a great one.

The same survey input would eventually serve support the club's donation and project goals for the year

One of the things I still hold most dearly is our mask making. Our Maskateers are amazing people.

The early weeks of the year we saw the beginning of our mask making efforts which continue to grow in stature and importance.

We've made lots of masks to date

- Some of them have been used for fundraising via stalls at the Morisset Station, Morisset Square shopping centre as well as our web site.
- We also sent some to Allison Hooper, President of the Rotary Club of Darwin Sunrise from who we received a \$250 donation for the cause.

We have also donated many masks.

- Locally to Southlakes Community Services for them to use for vulnerable locals.
- Children, staff and teachers at the Orphanage in Timor Leste
- Good Neighbour Alliance men's shelters in Vista West USA via Rotary Club of Sierra.
- Some of the poorer communities in Papua New Guinea via the Rotary Club of Nondugl.
- Cochin in the southern State of Kerala in India to areas hard hit by the virus.

We were helped along the way by a lot of people too.

- The Rotary Club of Maitland Sunrise donated 100 or so cloth face masks left from their fundraising activities.
- Richelle Ellis, Founder and CEO of Bedhead Hats donated \$63 thousand dollars worth of their masks to our cause.
- And our dear friends at DHL Express Tuggerah who always made certain our goods arrived safely, donated a HUGE bag full of fabrics and elastics for us to use in our mask making project.

And while the best feeling is giving, we received some recognition along the way too.

What a privilege to be nominated by Greg Piper, Independent Member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly for Lake Macquarie for a Recognition Statement to be read at the NSW Parliament congratulating the Morisset Rotary Club's "Maskateers" for their efforts in the Community. (Thank you Greg).

And just in case you didn't know that we do good in our community have a listen to this .

(QUE THE TRACK)

The contributions didn't stop there.

We began our CapTure project via Pailine to make prosthetics out of plastic bottle caps

Pauline also facilitated a pyjama parcel for Allira House at Christmas time and Barbara made up toiletry packs more recently for the ladies.

Bernie Fitzsimons continued his musical Robin-Hood - Music for Kidz program bringing the joy of making music to everyone.

And our Eleni wound up her amazing Ngoma Afrika Morogoro medical support project which provided education on malaria prevention, a ladies toilet block, first aid training and kits to the people of the Morogoro Region of Tanzania

You can feel proud to have also supported:

- Rotary Foundation
- End Polio
- ShelterBox
- Australian Rotary Health
- ROMAC
- Interplast
- The Timor Leste Orphanage
- Integrated Service Dogs Australia

We also did great fun and fund raising during the year.

We reacquainted ourselves with sausage sizzling with our great friends Bunnings who called on us to re-start their BBQ fundraising season.

Our major trailer raffle was on, no off, and then on again. We tried on-line raffle ticket sales. For the first time and even did some sales at Morisset Square during December.

Thanks again to Greg Piper MP who joined club officials on a Zoom call to carry out the major draw. Fantastic.

Graeme and Mike did a great job completing our amazing out-house for the dunny-roll-toss game which was extremely popular at both the combined Rotary Speers Point and the Rathmines (Up In the Air) festivals. The odds of multiple dunks were checked and re-checked to ensure success at each event.

Rathmines Up In the Air festival also provided the opportunity for our cat herders to manage parking on the day for a club donation.

At Newcastle Show, in 3 short days we managed to prepare and sell approximately 1,060 sausage sandwiches, 542 steak sandwiches, 799 bacon & egg sandwiches and 456 drinks. That's over 15 grand sales for the weekend and a great way to replenish the community support account..

As Covid eventually faded, we found ourselves looking for a new home to support a larger club and social distancing dimensions.

We went through a process that bounced us from South Lakes Community Centre to Church in The Trees, The Morisset High School, Chilled Café and we eventually landed at the Wangi Workers Club, Dobell Room. (which I hope we can return to quickly).

I'm really proud of how we held together through the Zoom months and made the most of them. I agree that it's not for everyone all of the time, but what a way to stay connected and engage some amazing people along the way.

You know I think we're probably one of the only clubs that provides Zoom as a portal to weekly club meetings.

Do you recall that we spoke to:

- Rajeev Wijesinghe regarding the 737-Max
- Tori, Shaun & Jesse about their new provisional Rotary Club of Newcastle Discovery.
- Wendy Stein from the Rotary Club of Salamander Bay about a program for Women's health in Papua New Guinea called Spacim Pikinini, (space out your babies)
- Rotarian Brian Ashworth of Rotary Greater Dandenong and Endeavour Hills speak to us about Disaster Aid Australia
- Club member Melanie Fahey-Sconce about Dyslexia awareness.
- What about past inbound exchange students Anna Kezdi about her Covid experience and Agathe Dulongcourty from France, as well as the (outgoing return from Italy), Jordyn Tripney.
- Brook Murphy joined us from Southlakes Community Services (SCS) to talk some of the programs and services they provide in the area.
- Our own Kerry Morrissey talked about Margaret Illukol who was dragged from her village and horrifically mauled by a hyena at 8 years of age and who's legacy is Rotary's Margaret Illukol trust.
- Shelterbox CEO Mike Greenslade told us how Shelterbox has provided urgent immediate shelter to disasters around the world since 2000.
- We were honoured to have guest speaker, Mr Samuel Soares , First Secretary for Political & Economic Affairs at the Embassy of Timor-Leste in Canberra gave us an update on the challenges and progress in developing the world's newest sovereign country.
- Erica Henley, recipient of 2019/20 RI Zone 8 Humanitarian Award to talk about her passion for Operation Hope Australia.
- Judy and Peter Ford spoke to us about Heart Support Australia
- Visiting Rotarian from Dubbo, Mr Nasser Sedghi spoke about minority persecution in Iran.
- Rotarian Linette Collins from Rotary Club of Jakarta Sentral talkrd about Support for HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care in Bali.
- Amanda Findley, Mayor the Shoalhaven City Council addressed us 12 months after the devastating 2020 fires in the area.

- Rotarian Sue O'Neill spoke to us about RAWCS and gave many examples of projects they are involved in.
- Toronto Sunrise Rotary's Tim Turner joined us to talk through likely scenarios of how the Evergiven container ship ran aground in the Suez Canal.
- Our very own Katherine gave a heartfelt narrative about her journey to Rotary, but

And the absolute climax was to have the current President of Rotary International, Holger Knaack talk about his Rotary year challenges.

It was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to have President Holger Knaack address a small club in the way he did. Thank you and take a bow Peter Comino.

Rotary introduced a 5th pillar of the environment in 2021 which immediately struck a chord with the club.

President Elect Sue Hooper unveiled her green thumb early which promoted a club presentation and visits to their Awaba Landcare site and we also considered projects with Southlakes community garden and the Morisset High School.

August 2021 brings the opportunity for us to begin our partnership with Tomra establishing the Morisset Rotary Youth Mental Health program as a donation destination on machines in Wangi, Bonnells Bay and Doyalson which collectively represent the Western Shores Learning Alliance feeder network into Morisset High School.

This should be a great opportunity to improve our green credentials, educate the community, recycle and accept community donations in our community.

We have lot's to be proud of and lot's to look forward to in President Sue Hooper's year with the Rotary Club of Morisset.

I think I'm going to end my year as President with the same comment as I started in Manuscripts #1.

Our challenge over the next months will be to find a way to continue to meet face-to-face and ensure we do more in the community, which is what we do best.

Thank you all. I remain humbled for the experience.