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"BE THE INSPIRATION"

Article by RC PDG John Prendergast



Sometimes with Rotary International Presidents' annual themes we can struggle to figure out how the theme can have relevance for our Clubs. Many of them have been very good, but we've also had the odd doozy over the years!

So how does President Barry Rassin's **Be The Inspiration** stack up when it comes to being relevant, and useful as a call to action for our Clubs?

Pretty good I think.

It's often said that Rotary begins and ends with our Clubs – it's through the activities of our almost 36,000 Clubs that we are able to do so much good for communities large and small around the globe. Since our first community project to establish public toilet facilities for shoppers in Chicago over a hundred years ago, Rotarians through their Clubs have given the world millions of community projects – and I mean quite literally, millions of projects.

Such a huge body of good work can't help but be inspirational – not only for the communities that benefit from those projects, but also for the Rotarians who get enormous pleasure and fulfilment by actually undertaking these projects.

Rotary's work can provide inspiration to a community as small as just one person – perhaps a young student selected to participate in a Rotary Youth Leadership programme, or a Rotary Youth Exchange student - right through to inspiration for millions through a big global project such as the Polio eradication programme. And between those two bookends you can stack all the other projects Rotary Clubs do each year that provide inspiration locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

The recent awful events in Christchurch saw inspirational responses from Rotary – within hours of the tragedy unfolding, the Riccarton, Linwood and Ferrymead Rotary Clubs in Christchurch had launched appeals to raise money for the families of the victims; and the Dunedin Rotaract Club spent the Friday afternoon baking biscuits, and collecting letters of condolence from Otago University students, to pass on to the families.

Our Clubs can also provide inspiration to their members – inspiration in the form of the personal development Rotarians can experience in areas such as leadership, running a meeting, delegation, public speaking, and an array of other skills learned and developed through being a member of a Rotary Club that can be used in the Club members' lives beyond Rotary. Inspiration from the enjoyment and sense of fulfilment Rotarians experience by rolling their sleeves up and engaging in a project to benefit their community. And inspiration through the many and enduring friendships that develop between Club members.

Rotary's new vision sets out very well how we can provide inspiration:

"Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves."

By uniting and taking action we can create lasting change, and that can be inspirational.

So I think it's easy for Rotarians individually and collectively to heed President Barry's call to **Be The Inspiration** – be an active member of your Club, involve yourself in projects at and beyond your Club, use Rotary as a vehicle for personal and professional development – and just by doing those what might seem ordinary Rotary activities, you'll be a source of inspiration and have an impact far greater than you might ever imagine.

"3 THINGS CLUB PRESIDENTS-ELECT CAN DO NOW"

Article by Barbara Mifsud, Regional Membership Officer, Membership Development, South Pacific and Philippines Office, barbara.mifsud@rotary.org, <https://www.facebook.com/barbara.mifsud.1>



It's never too early for presidents-elect to work on their membership development plans for the coming year. District leaders, be sure to share these key membership messages with incoming presidents at PETS, or send it in a follow up email if your district's PETS has already taken place:

Create your My Rotary Account

My Rotary gives you a customized experience with access to tools and information about your club like membership trends (including gender and age), project funding and volunteer trends, and annual fund trends. If club presidents-elect have not set up their My Rotary account, they're missing out! Encourage them to get started by sharing the [How to Create a My Rotary Account](#) guide.

Build Your Club Membership Committee

We all know it takes a village to tackle big challenges. It's important to assemble a team of capable members to help your club membership chair plan, implement, and carry out membership attraction and engagement strategies to strengthen your club. Check out the [Club Membership Committee Check List](#) to get an idea of the roles and responsibilities of the club membership committee.

Get Your Members' Feedback

Once you know how members feel about their club experience, you can create strategic plans to address opportunities for improvement and continue to build on the things that your members love about your club. Use a member satisfaction survey, like [Enhancing the Club Experience](#), to get your members' feedback about club culture and meetings, projects, dues and costs, value, and more. **Tip!** Tailor survey questions to represent the culture of your club, and put the questions in a free survey platform, like Survey Monkey, to electronically distribute to members for ease and convenience.

Membership Leads report

Membership leads submitted through rotary.org/join are first sent to the district leadership team. That's why it's beneficial to have an established process for quickly and effectively managing leads and connecting these prospective members with the right club. It's important that districts and clubs use My Rotary to update the status of candidates, because that data then populates reports on:

- How far leads have gotten since they were assigned to your district
- What percentage of leads haven't been followed up on
- What percentage of leads are no longer interested in membership
- How many leads have been admitted to a club

See how your district is doing and get guides to help you:

- [Australia](#) - [New Zealand and Pacific Islands](#)

[How to manage Membership Leads for clubs](#)

[How to manage Membership Leads for districts](#)

Membership Statistics as at 28 February 2019

Comparison to 1 July 2018:

- [Australia](#) - [New Zealand and Pacific Islands](#)

Detailed demographic information such as gender, alumni, under 40s:

- [Australia](#) - [New Zealand and Pacific Islands](#)

Shout out!

This month's shout out goes to [D9455](#) who is at the top of the leader board this month for their net increase of 57 members, the highest in the region. District Membership Chair Jerry Pilcher notes the increase is coupled with the creation of two new clubs this Rotary year, both offering different models to the traditional club.

"The [Rotary Club of Beaufort](#) is a great blend of gender, age and ethnic diversity offering a dynamic meeting format where all members are involved in the decision-making processes. They do not have a meal but members can get together after the evening meeting, thus the overall cost is up to the individual member," says PDG Jerry.

"[Rotary Club of Perth City East](#) is now our third club that meets in the Perth CBD. This is a club deliberately targeting business people and professionals. It's a breakfast club, freeing up members' time during the day."

Jerry says that both clubs were carefully planned so the club ethos, logistics, projects and fundraising were well in place before they chartered.

"It is interesting to note that in [D9455](#) – the only years that we have grown membership over the past 10 years is when we have chartered new clubs".

"DIVERSITY MATTERS"

Article by PDG Jessie Harman, Chair Rotary International Membership Committee



The principle of diversity has been central to Rotary since its inception. Originally its focus was vocations; clubs were required to have members reflecting the diversity of occupations within their communities. More recently the focus of diversity has expanded – to include gender, age, ethnicity, faith, ability and sexual orientation.

To underscore the importance of diversity, the Board of Rotary International recently adopted a formal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy. That policy clearly recognises that the organisation and its clubs must take action to ensure Rotary is more reflective of the communities it serves.

A more diverse membership is critical to Rotary's future success. Members with different backgrounds and viewpoints give clubs a broader understanding of the community and its needs, and better equip clubs to find solutions. However diversity needs to be matched with a culture of inclusiveness – to ensure that differences are respected and valued, and members feel like they belong in Rotary.

To help clubs increase diversity and develop inclusiveness, Rotary International has produced a range of resources. Downloadable from the Rotary.org website, they include:

- [Member Diversity Assessment](#) - to help clubs identify their opportunities to increase diversity
- [Building a Diverse Club](#) – an online learning centre course to support clubs to strengthen membership and increase capacity to serve
- [Creating a positive experience for prospective members](#) – packed with tips and ideas to ensure best fit between the needs of prospective members and their clubs
- [Best practices for engaging members](#) – an online learning course to help clubs provide a genuinely satisfying experience for members
- [Understanding why members leave \(exit survey\)](#) – to help clubs uncover opportunities to better meet the needs of future members

In addition to these resources, clubs can contact their Zone and District resources for support – Rotary Co-ordinators and District Membership Chairs, and RI's Regional Membership Officer are ready and able to assist clubs to increase diversity, equity and inclusiveness.

In the end, diverse clubs make for more creative solutions, increased impact and a more satisfying member experience – and it is everyone's responsibility to make this happen. So ask yourself: How diverse is my club? What steps will I take to increase diversity, equity and inclusiveness to strengthen the future for Rotary?

"SUCCESSFUL MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVE"

How our Club increased membership by 33% in 9 Months since 1/7/2018

Article by President Ron Allars, Rotary Club of Brookvale, 9 March 2019



Brookvale Club had the problem of seriously declining membership while annually raising over \$100,000 for Charity each year from our Pub2Pub Fun Run which we have been managing for the past 15 years. We were getting 8 - 12 members attending our weekly meetings from a membership of 18, some of whom were having health problems.

I had been inspired by the experiences shared at the 2018 District Assembly Membership Forum so set up a Club committee of 5 younger enthusiastic Rotarians and we brainstormed ideas for attracting new younger members.

We had been a weekly Lunch Club for 35 years with our members established local business people but found that the current generation of prospective members have greater work pressures that make attending Lunch Meetings difficult even after PP Brian Dunphy had initiated fortnightly meetings.

After unsuccessfully attempting a Breakfast option we hit on the idea of using our Fun Run Database of 200 volunteers (not all local) to invite prospects to a couple of monthly Alfresco 6pm gatherings at a New local Club which we branded:

BrookyLite "Entrepreneurs 30 – 50+ Making a Difference"

The key was issuing **personal** Invitations from our Rotarians who could follow up and encourage rather than email or letterbox approaches which we had failed previously.

The result was amazing with 6 new faces each time but we soon realised Rotary was a mystery to most of the visitors who attended so we partnered them with Rotarians to begin their Rotary education.

Flexible Meeting Options Popular

So now 9 months later we have twice monthly Lunch Rotary Business Meetings and Monthly **BrookyLite** Evening Meetings at which have had presentations relating to one of the 5 Avenues of Service.

BrookyLite was not conceived as a Satellite Club but as flexible attendance option for our Club Members.

To date we have **inducted 7 new Rotarians** with a net gain of 6 after the passing of one of our Foundation Members last August so we now have a membership of 25 with others interested.

Even more exciting is that 2 of these new Rotarians are enthusiastically joining me on our Club's Aid trip to Sri Lanka and The Maldives later this month.

"BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP HAPPENING @ MONBULK"

Article by PP Helen Riethof, RC Monbulk & District, D9810

On February 20, 2019, the [Rotary Club of Monbulk & District](#) inducted four members – two of whom have joined as Business representatives. Two more Business applications have been received for processing with a March date to be confirmed for those inductions.

Monbulk is a small community in the Dandenong Ranges to the east of Melbourne. As such, each of the inductees know one another, are known to most of our members, are very active and committed members of our community and already serve in one or more community organisations.

What was our goal?

- To increase our membership by at least two or three.

Who did we aim to approach?

- The CEOs, Directors or owners of businesses within our local area

STAGE ONE - THE PROCESS

Step 1: Development of a data base of 17 businesses

Step 2: Development of a presentation folder for dissemination to each business by mail

- i. designed a **BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM / Volunteer in your local community** cover page for what became a 5-page document that included:
- ii. **The Benefits of Membership - Opportunity awaits your team!** 3-page document about Rotary, that described:
 - the benefits to a business of Rotary membership
 - details about the processes required for successful application through to induction
 - details about participation/meeting requirements, fees, dinner arrangements, new member orientation as required, WWC expectations.

In short, we wanted prospective members to know as much about Rotary and the expected level of involvement and costs as was possible and practical in such a document

- iii. Finally, page 5 listed **areas of service in which the business might care to participate** under the headings: Youth Service, Community Engagement and International Aid and Support.

These 5 pages were merged into one document and professionally printed ready for distribution.

Our main aim throughout Step 2, was to present a polished document that would represent Rotary as a professional organisation in every sense.

This document was inserted into a Rotary presentation folder along with our club brochure, the RI foldout brochure 'What in the world does Rotary do?', the 'Volunteering - Individuals making an impact' brochure plus, an application form. This folder was then mailed to each of the 17 businesses.

Nothing happened!

And so, we moved on to the Second phase of our Business program

1. We reviewed and tweaked our documentation.
2. Our Membership Chair Gary Jans then contacted each of the 17 Businesses to ascertain their level of interest.
3. Gary arranged to visit or to meet for coffee with each CEO/Business owner who expressed any level of interest at all. In the majority of cases, the original folder had not been opened or had been skimmed over. Not to worry, Gary presented each with a new (revamped) folder, discussed the contents with them and further explained the all-round benefits to their business and for us, of them joining our Rotary Club.
4. Followed up those who now expressed an interest and assisted them where needed to complete their application form.
5. Worked through all of the usual procedures of applicant approvals, ordering of badges and new member folders and sending out invitations for the induction ceremonial dinner.

It is exciting for the club to now be planning the induction of the 5th and 6th new members and hopefully more in the offing as we follow up those who indicated they **"are interested, but not right now"**.

Follow up, follow up is our mantra.



L-R President John Coleman, Teresa Schroder (Monbulk Produce Market coordinator), Scott Allison Fletchers Real Estate Olinda and Aimee te Boekhorst Monbulk Community Bank – Bendigo Bank. Missing is Peter Roche recently retired Monbulk Butcher.

"HOW D9640 TOOK THE CHALLENGE TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP TO +45 IN 2018?"

Article by DGN 2020-21 Andy Rajapakse, Public Image chair 2017-19, District 9640



On 1 July 2018 D9640 lost 41 members when a club amicably transferred to the southern district 9650 in NSW due to geographic reasons. This plummeted their membership to 1153 on 1st July 2018. They bounced back and on 31st Dec 2018 our membership grew with +45 to be the No 1 membership growth district in Australia and New Zealand. This is how they did it.

1. This success was a result of a 2-year collaborated effort between District Membership Chairman PDG Michael Irving and District Public Image Chairman DGN Andy Rajapakse working towards one goal of increasing & retaining membership. Which gave them resilience in the face of declining Rotary membership across Australia.
2. They identified the problems in declining membership was due to having no strategy in retaining new members. These were due to the new members not meeting their expectations inside their clubs.
3. For club leaders to understand the Australia wide picture we purchased 200 copies of Creatures of Habit book written by Rtn. Mark Huddleston from South Australia and handed a copy each to all club Presidents & Secretaries during the club visits by then District Governor Darrell Brown in 2017/2018 and to all AG's and District Leadership Team members, said DGN Andy. This helped all our club leaders to be on the same page.
4. Then to draw the attention of club leaders how to overcome this dangerous trend of losing members, we organised district seminar in October 2018 on membership Retention titled "There's Hole in the Bucket". Key Note speakers were Mark Huddleston author of the book Creature of Habit and Rtn. Evan Burrell Social Media specialist from NSW and Editor of RDU Facebook. The seminar was attended by 80 Rotarians from 41 clubs. Many had read the book and were enthusiastic to attend and hear more. This was an innovative way to get the message out to clubs that retention of members was a serious matter in Rotary.
5. Simultaneously we increased our Rotary Public Image with proactive Facebook video campaigns over 4 months, setting up a chat bot using artificial intelligence on our district Facebook for rapid engagement with those prospective members who wanted quick information, regular website updates and a Bus Superside advertisement.
6. In addition we collaborated with local networking groups, local Chambers of Commerce and local Small Business Expo to provide our clubs new platforms to expand Rotary's Brand reach and fish for new members.
7. With this new enthusiasm and publicity generation, in the first 6 months of this Rotary year, we were able to form a new Rotary club with 21 members, form a new satellite club of our E Club for RYLA Alumni with 8 members, transform a satellite club with 14 members to an independent club of 22 members. The icing on the cake was that 37 of our 52 clubs retained or increased their members from 1 July 2018 to 31 Dec 2018.
8. Success is for those who dream big. So, in March this year we launched our first Passport Rotary Club in Gold Coast. Facebook [goldcoastpassportrotary](#) that we plan to charter by May to bring in another 25 to 30 young professionals. We have also set in motion to transform the new Satellite RYLA Alumni EClub to be a full E Club with 20 members by end of this Rotary year to bring in another 12 new members. Taking many change factors into play, our district goal is to be over +50 on 30th June 2019 and have over 1200 members in our district when DGE Harry Boulton takes over.

"MEMBERSHIP FOCUS - 2019 INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY"

From *Regional Bulletin February 2019, Rotary South Pacific and Philippines Office*

At International Assembly President Elect Mark Maloney called on every Rotary and Rotaract club to identify segments of their community not represented in their club by creating a membership committee with diverse members.

He also urges clubs to offer alternative meeting experiences and service opportunities to make it easier for busy professionals and people with many family obligations to serve in leadership roles.

- Watch the video [here](#)
- Download the [club membership committee checklist](#)
- Enrol in the [club membership committee basics](#) learning plan
- Report your incoming club membership chair in My Rotary with this [guide](#)
- Conduct a [study](#) of your members' occupation and work to align your membership with the mix of businesses and professions in your community

"SOMETIMES IT PAYS TO HAVE A LOOK OVER THE FENCE"

Article by ARC PDG Craig Edmonston



The small North Queensland town of Ingham in D9550, about 110km north of Townsville, has produced at least two World Presidents. The first, born in 1921, went on to become the President of Rotary International in 1978-79 was our Sir Clem Renouf AM. While Sir Clem Renouf is well known to Rotarians worldwide, the second World President, I expect will be virtually unknown. Kevin Weldon AM was born in Ingham in 1933, and like Sir Clem, became an outstanding world leader. Kevin Weldon has been described by John Singleton, as 'the greatest unknown Australian'. I agree with him.

Kevin Weldon started his career at a Brisbane newspaper, colour etching at the age of 15, under the guidance of Horrie Hogarth. Horrie taught Kevin his mantra, "**Good enough is never good enough**". I was fortunate to learn about Kevin Weldon many years ago. I still have an old cassette containing an interview with him, which taught me a lot about customer relations and service. Kevin doesn't know me, but he has had a major influence on my life, as I also adopted the "**Good enough is never good enough**" mantra. Besides becoming a world leading publisher, a philanthropist, and founder of EarthWatch Australia, whose vision is: "**Empowering people to save the natural world**", a truly remarkable foundation, Kevin was very much involved in Surf Lifesaving. In 1971, Kevin became President of the 'World Life Saving Movement'. He later became involved in merging the three world bodies representing life saving and life guards, and on 24 February 1993, became the inaugural President of the International Lifesaving Federation (ILF).

While I have never been involved in Lifesaving clubs, I have always regarded them as part of a large service organisation, providing a vital and wonderful service to thousands of communities throughout the world. According to the WHO, in 2015, an estimated 360,000 people died from drowning, making drowning a major public health problem worldwide, being the 3rd leading cause of unintentional injury death.

I often wonder, when I hear the claim that Rotary is the oldest or largest service organisation in the world, if anyone actually looks over the fence at other organisations which service our very own communities.

Lifesaving is recorded in Amsterdam in 1767, in England in 1824, and in 1891 it is recorded that several national lifesaving organisations were working together but in an informal manner. In fact, the first Lifesavers World Congress was held in Marseille, France in 1878.

When Kevin Weldon became President of the ILF, the worldwide membership was 25 million, the second largest volunteer organisation after Red Cross, and more than 20 times the size of Rotary.

This probably helps explain why, when I drive past my local Rotary Park, I rarely see a Rotarian there. But when I go another 300 metres, I often see many lifesaver club members of all ages but mostly quite young. In my home town we have less than 40 Rotarians and about the same number of Lions. However, there are over 400 members of the local Surf Lifesaving Club and another 200 members down the road about 20km. A local news story recently described how a 16-year-old who had just become a qualified lifesaver, had made 20 rescues in their first year, an absolute truckload of intrinsic reward. I think this is community service at its best and deserves to be better recognised.

In 2016, the Cape May Beach Patrol in New Jersey USA, had chalked up 105 years of service without a drowning, on the 25 beaches the club patrols – not a bad effort. In 2015 the Patrol attended to 112 rescues of 136 people.

I can't help but think, what could we learn from organisations like the International Lifesaving Federation, when we talk about growing Rotary or when we want to get our message out into the local community.

One thing I believe, is that when I see the number of 'Nippers' on the beach most weekends, Rotary International needs to change its attitude towards RotaKids and, not only welcome them into the Rotary family, but embrace them and nurture them. I think our future lies in the hands of our rapidly expanding Interact Clubs and the new kids on the block - RotaKids.

I am also sure that we are not going to find the panacea for our growth aspirations by continuing to talk to ourselves. If we pause for a moment and take a good look over the fence, we may just see something different, something new, even something old that we have been blind to – something that may assist in growing Rotary.

"MEMBERSHIP GROWTH"

By PDG Bruce Allen, from *Regional Bulletin February 2019, Rotary South Pacific and Philippines Office*

The true path to membership growth is simply asking the right people to be part of what we do. It's not the responsibility of the district membership team, the club Membership Director or the Club President.

The responsibility rests with every single member of the club but I wonder how often we remind them of that fact. If all Rotarians in the world introduced just one member, we'd have 2.4 million Rotarians.

"4 DYNAMITE WAYS TO FIND NEW MEMBERS"

From Rotary Weekly, 8 March 2019. By Rob Tidd, District 5060 membership chair and member of the Rotary Club of Wenatchee Confluence, Wenatchee, Washington, USA



The Wenatchee Confluence Rotary Club's new members class of October 2018. Membership chair Rob Tidd says do something to make new members feel special, like framing their certificates and interviewing them during their induction.

In January, we had 61 members in our club, an increase of about 40 percent from the beginning of the Rotary year in July, when we had 43. Our success has been based on two ingredients: encouraging friendships and promoting fun in Rotary.

But just as important to our growth has been a systematic and continuous follow up with potential new members. Too often a potential new member is approached once and then forgotten. Every club needs a champion or champions willing to take the extra time to stay in communication with *every potential new member*. I am often asked where I find all these potential new members. Our sources grow as we come up with new ideas. Below are some of the practical ways we have found members:

Follow up on RI membership leads:

Prior to my year as District 5060 membership chair, I discovered that [some of the membership leads sent to us by RI](#) were never contacted. I decided to work my way back in time through the leads, going as far back as several years, to see if any of these individuals were still interested in Rotary.

One gentleman in particular had never been contacted and was enthusiastic to be invited as my guest. Not only did he join, but he asked if his business partner could also be considered for membership. Of course, my answer was "yes" and now both are members. These are people who took the time and made the effort to contact Rotary International.

Get referrals from other clubs:

I have found that sometimes a member of another club crosses paths with a co-worker who they think would be a good Rotarian, but because they are co-workers, or they have a boss-employee relationship, they don't want to invite them to be a member of their club. If something were to happen at work, it could create awkward situations in the club.

Yet that person might be a great fit for another Rotary club. So I routinely go through the membership lists for the other clubs in my area and ask for referrals. I know this works because we have Kyle as a member of our club who was referred to us by a member of another club.

Find leads in your local newspaper:

I get excited every day to see who I might find as a potential member in my daily newspaper. Our newspaper includes information about the movers and shakers in our community, the recently retired, new home purchasers, and new businesses. The list is endless. I craft specific letters and follow up in 30 days. Often it is not even necessary to follow up because the recipient is touched by the letter and accepts the invitation for lunch at my club. I know this works because we have Jeff in our club because he responded to my letter.

Keep organized with a spreadsheet:

I created a spreadsheet with a list of potential new members, and set up a schedule to follow up with these people. My list includes recommendations from club members in my club, people who have given presentations at my club, former Rotarians who left other Rotary clubs in my area due to dissatisfaction or lack of engagement with their former Rotary club, and recipients of the letters I mentioned above. Systematic and continuous follow up is so important. This list helps me stay on track to make sure no one is forgotten.

I hope you find this information helpful. May you also be successful in your quest for new members.

SHARE YOUR CLUB OR DISTRICT SERVICE PROJECT AND MEMBERSHIP BEST PRACTICES.

We would like to hear from Clubs or Districts telling us what they have done. Please include a summary, contact details, a couple of captioned photos, and email to [Issa Shalhoub](#), this Newsletter's editor.

We also would like readers to share their experiences and stories on Best Practices in their Clubs and what has worked for their Clubs in gaining new members and also what has helped in keeping members.

"ROTARY EXTENDS ASSISTANCE TO AUSSIE FARMERS"

From *Rotary News*, March 2019, source *The Northern Daily Leader*



Calala Club Joint President Evrol Keeyes, West Tamworth Club President Richard Chaffey, Quirindi Club President Nikki Robertson, Tamworth First Light Club President John Worldon, Cluster 6 Assistant Governor Dimity Betts and District 9650 eClub President John Barwick.

It's just one volunteer organisation in one small corner of NSW, but Cluster 6 of Rotary **District 9650** has recently marked its 610,000th dollar of drought assistance.

The cluster, made up of five Rotary clubs in Tamworth – including in the suburb of Calala, one in Manilla, one in Quirindi and one e-club, has worked with many parties to make sure the help gets where it's needed, assistant governor Dimity Betts said. And the "massive project" has been "testament to the work that Rotary does at a grassroots level and the fact it is quite connected with our communities," she said.

One example of that work was a recent drought forum the Calala group hosted on February 27, funded by the cluster. Emcee Russell Webb, a regional councillor, joked that with more than 100 people in attendance it was "the biggest meeting that Calala Rotary has ever had", and revealed the cluster's efforts had helped 474 families.

Betts said the money to do that, had come from "all over Australia". Some was from the '2018 Drought Relief Fund', a partnership with the National Farmers' Federation and Channel 9; some from the federal government's Drought Community Support Initiative.

Some of it was from clubs in other areas, such as **Toukley** on the NSW Central Coast, **Concord** in inner-western Sydney and **Moora** in Western Australia; and some from private donors.

And to make sure it helped the people most in need, Rotary called in the help of parties such as rural financial counsellors, rural suppliers, churches, even mechanics.

"We've tried to spread our feelers out through the community as much as we can," Betts said. "We wanted to try and reach the people who were coming forward asking for help – but also the people who weren't coming forward and asking for help." That help has been mostly in the form of vouchers or prepaid Visa cards – some worth up to \$3,000.

Rotary Club of Quirindi President Nikki Robertson said that, while the funds were dwindling, the requests for help were ramping up. "We're getting lots of people putting hands up and calling to get help, and they're telling me "This is a really hard phone call I didn't want to make'," she said.

But she said the clubs were happy to "take the pressure off paying bills and letting people know that there's somebody here who cares". "I got a phone call yesterday telling me that we saved his life, and that's quite big," she said. "It's a band-aid unfortunately, the problem is ongoing ... so we're hoping we're going to get more funding, because this is not over by a long shot."

All past editions of the "Rotary on the Move" Newsletter can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#)

If you wish to receive an electronic copy of this Newsletter, or you know of someone who would like to receive one, please email the editor; Issa Shalhoub drissa@bigpond.com

ROTARY COORDINATORS TEAM

2018 - 19

ZONES 8 AND 7B

Zone 8; Australia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and Nauru.

Zone 7B; New Zealand, New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, Vanuatu, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Tonga and Samoa.

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