

BOX HILL CENTRAL ROTARY CLUB

1990-2000

A BRIEF HISTORY BY RTN IAN PORT

INTRODUCTION

The formation of our club was a reflection of the growth in the 1970's and 1980's of the Box Hill District Centre and the adjoining Prospect Street area Office precinct. Many of our Charter members were drawn from this business district.

Interest meetings were held at Kurban's Restaurant in Box Hill during February and March 1990 with the Mayor Councillor Tom Thorpe and District Governor Ray Adams addressing the main one. Following a lot of organisation and encouragement, particularly from Max Buchanan, the club was granted its Charter on 4th April 1990.

Our Charter Presentation night was held on Friday 25th May 1990 at the Box Hill Town Hall with over 250 in attendance, including representatives of over 28 Rotary Clubs from our District and surrounding Districts.

1990/01 CHARTER PRESIDENT BRIAN MCPHAIL

District Governor Ray Adams presented to our Charter President Brian McPhail, the Official Charter signed by the President of Rotary International Hugh M. Archer.

Our club began with 32 charter members with another two - Ken Clark and Ben Stypel joining the club on Charter night - a total of 34.

Making up the membership on Charter night were 6 women and 28 men. Women in Rotary was a recent and welcome change so quite a deal of interest was shown by other clubs about what female membership would mean in a traditional male domain. In the year 2001 we are pleased to record a continuing strong female membership.

In ten years we have had three female Presidents, Joanne Wilkinson, Philippa deVoil and Jennifer Wickland. Our female members have an enviable record of service at District Level and at District Conferences.

In particular, we acknowledge and congratulate PP Jennifer Wickland on her personal record of service to District 9810 since joining Rotary in 1991 and her recent success of being nominated as District Governor for 2003-04.

Our very successful lunch time meetings commenced at Kurban's where we enjoyed splendid friendship and hospitality - the ingredients that immediately established a strong, successful and stable club.

Our first District Conference was held in Adelaide. It was a huge success due largely to the knowledge, experience and organising skills of Ralston Wood. Ralston was formerly a member of the Rotary Club of Box Hill and it was he along with some others who offered to become Charter Members of Box Hill Central.

We have long been inspired by Ralston's loyalty and commitment to Rotary and we acknowledge and congratulate him on his remarkable record of 100% attendance extending over the 18 years of his Rotary membership.

Brian McPhail served the club with distinction as its first President until 27 June 1991 when, on Changeover Night, our Charter President Elect Ian Port took office.

1991/92 PRESIDENT IAN PORT

On 18 September 1991 club meetings were relocated to Box Hill RSL, Clubrooms in Nelson Road where for the next five years we enjoyed the care of RSL management, chief Caterer Jurgen Ritters and the goodwill of Box Hill Corps of the Salvation Army who provided us with off-street car parking located immediately opposite the RSL.

We were pleased to support a number of community based organisations during the course of the year including \$1,000 worth of equipment for Biala Early Intervention Centre in Box Hill. This donation resulted from monies raised from a car raffle conducted by the club which were required to be donated to child support services

In conjunction with the Box Hill Club we were involved in the joint hosting of an overseas exchange student Maj-Len Lindman from Finland.

On 10 June 1992 the club handed over to Box Hill Hospital President Clive Ward and Chief Executive Alisdair MacDonald a cheque for \$2,800 to fund the purchase of a bed and equipment.

The first of our fund raising breakfasts was held on 15 October 1991 with the Leader of the State Opposition, Mr Jeff Kennett as guest speaker. The second was on 11 February 1992 with Taxation Commissioner Trevor Boucher guest speaker. Each attracted an attendance of around 200 with close to \$4,000 raised. At the March 1992 District Conference in Albury we made our first contribution as a club with a challenging address by Joanne Wilkinson on her role as a woman in Rotary. With expected aplomb and humour John Lawrence as Sergeant-at-Arms raised a remarkable \$1,190 in fines.

1992/93 PRESIDENT JOANNE WILKINSON

The first of our female Presidents Joanne Wilkinson, took office for our third year.

The club nominated its first candidates for a Group Study Exchange Team to South Carolina with both nominees Rod Williams and Andrew Sudholz successful.

A financial commitment of \$7,600 was made to commemorate the life of Barry O'Dea, a Charter Member and friend of all, who sadly passed away on 27 September 1992. The commitment took the form of furnishing the new Barry O'Dea Activities Room at Forty Dorking Road Hostel together with some landscaping work. Up to the time of his death Barry served with distinction as Manager of Forty Dorking Road.

The monthly Sunday Sausage Sizzle commenced this year. In addition to generating funds this became a regular social and fun activity for club members, their partners and families. This developed into the club taking over the full management of the Box Hill Art and Craft Market held monthly in the Box Hill Mall. Geoff Limmer and John Wilkins, in particular, devoted much time and effort to the management of the Market which until its demise in May 1997 contributed up to \$7,000 to the club's fund raising efforts.

1993/94 PRESIDENT MURRAY BAIRD

A feature of the year with Murray Baird as President was the exciting Books for Western Samoa project. This involved nearly all club members with some making a major contribution. Andrew Forgas and his International Committee gave outstanding leadership and support to the project which was originally devised and developed by John Wilkins.

The project challenged club members and District Rotarians to collect, catalogue and despatch a full container load of books for distribution by the Rotary Club of Apia in Western Samoa to replenish schools and libraries decimated by storm damage. The container, 28 cubic metres in size, carrying 20,000 books and weighing 11 tonnes, was generously shipped at no cost to the club by the Australian National Line and other organisations.

The project was acknowledged in the receipt of the Rotary District 9810 International Service Award for 1993/94 presented at the District Changeover Night in June 1994.

The club is rightly proud of the inspiration (and perspiration !!) involved in this uniClue project.

The year also introduced an Essay Competition in local Primary Schools entitled Building Bridges with our Asian Neighbours. The competition, initiated by the International Committee under Chairperson Jenny Wickland, involved children aged 11 and 12 years of age and with the support of sponsor Angus & Robertson was a great success. President Murray inspired the school students with his address when presenting the award to the winning entrant.

Geoff Limmer's Community Service Committee organised two Home Safety Awareness programs in April and May 1994. With the assistance of the Fire Brigade and St John's Ambulance this program was very well received and was of great community benefit.

1994/95 PRESIDENT ANDREW FORGAS

With Andrew Forgas as the club's fifth President we celebrated on 23 February the 90th Anniversary of Rotary International at a Dinner function held in the Box Hill Town Hall in conjunction with our Sponsor club, the Rotary Club of Box Hill.

We salute President Andrew not only for his undoubted commitment to Rotary International and his own club but also for the time and energy he devotes to PLAN International

In continuing support of PLAN club members contribute weekly to the sponsorship of a child in a third world country.

A highlight for the year was our participation in the successful 1995 District Conference in Albany. We were invited by our parent club, the Rotary Club of Box Hill, to participate in the organisation of the event. We were pleased to do so because of our special relationship with District Governor Max Buchanan who was the DG's Special Representative in 1990 and was largely responsible for the formation of our club.

Although the RSL was catering well for our needs it became evident during the course of the year that more and more members were finding difficulty attending regular lunchtime meetings. As a result a decision was made to change to a breakfast meeting. We were fortunate in being able to secure an excellent venue at Box Hill Golf Club and the change was made without losing a single member.

1995/96 PRESIDENT RALSTON WOOD

Under the experienced hand of new club President Ralston Wood the club settled into its new venue at Box Hill Golf Club.

Our attendance record might not have immediately improved as we would have liked but our members quickly embraced breakfast time meetings, which had a minimal impact on the working day, as meetings are timed to finish at 8.30am sharp. President Ralston established the basis of a good relationship with Functions Manager David Egan and the ever-reliable and cheerful breakfast co-ordinator Marlene Cripps who continues to attend so well to our weekly needs.

John and Caroline Jenkins and their helpers organised another very successful Business Breakfast with Mr Jeff Kennett, on this occasion as State Premier, again accepting our invitation to be guest speaker. It was a splendid function with over 200 in attendance and made a profit of \$3,385.50.

Our club, along with the other four in the City of Whitehorse, instituted a Rotary Achievement Award open to any person actively engaged in business or industry in the City of Whitehorse. The award was in the form of an inscribed plaque and a cash prize of \$1,000. The winner was Maxine Rothwell from Ezi-Tag Systems (name tags).

1996/97 PRESIDENT JOHN LAWRENCE

Another of our Charter members, the inimitable and popular John Lawrence, led us as President for this year. As one would expect with John at the helm, meetings were never lacking in interest, fun and entertainment.

A very successful project was sponsorship of the Heart smartKit, a set of three brochures in an attractive folder designed specifically for people with heart disease.

The project was initiated by Community Services Chairman Trevor Dalziel and his Committee with the cooperation of Box Hill Hospital and the National Heart Foundation. The project achieved prominence in local and hospital publications.

During the course of the year Laurie Smale and Lesley Bell, members of our Youth Service Committee, conducted a very successful public speaking skills program for Year 9 students. The contest was held at Kingswood College on 25 June 1997.

Laurie Smale's presentation skills are highly regarded and represent a unique combination of Youth and Vocational Service.

The club maintained its involvement in the Group Study Exchange program by hosting the Incoming Team from District 7930 for a visit to the Grand Prix.

Another project of the Youth Services Committee was to sponsor the attendance of Warren Anderson at the Moebius Syndrome Conference in Tarrytown, New York.

1997/98 PRESIDENT PHILIPPA DE VOIL

Philippa de Voil, another of our Charter Members, was welcomed as President for this year. With Ralston Wood as her Membership Chairman, Philippa inducted eight new members during the course of the year.

The District Conference at Warnambool was a great success but made particularly special for us by the award of Most Improved Club Bulletin. President Philippa said at the time "Peter Goodin's journalistic talents produced another year's exceptional Club Bulletin and we have the product and the trophy to prove it. Congratulations Peter! ".

Another very successful fundraising Breakfast, this time largely organised by John Lawrence with speakers on the topical subject Year 2000 Millennium Bug raised our fundraising for the year to over \$10,000.

Wine bottling was a welcome new initiative that netted \$1,418. Of the \$9,092 donated to various causes during the course of the year \$2,560 went to Rotary Foundation, \$2,000 to Save Water Save Lives and \$1,000 to the PNG Drought Relief Fund.

1998/99 PRESIDENT TREVOR DALZIEL

Trevor Dalziel led the club as its new President. Ever cheerful and with more than a just a touch of wit and humour we would always look forward to Trevor's Message for the week.

An interesting change in club policy saw members respond positively to active involvement in the Rotary Youth Exchange program with selection of our outgoing student Kathryn Thomas from East Doncaster Secondary College and planning for the arrival of our first Exchange Student Torunn Tronsvang from Norway.

We were delighted that our club candidate, Jude Kendall, was accepted for the GSE team to Scotland.

Two students from Kingswood College were sponsored by the club for the MUNA (Model United Nations Assembly) debate. They both won the challenge and participated in the finals held in Canberra.

A major feature of the year was the club's support for the Here for Life program dealing with youth suicide issues. The aim was to develop a series of brochures aimed at educating parents, youth workers, teachers and the general public about the signs of depression, suicidal tendencies and coping with loss.

A Club donation of \$7,000 together with help from Rotaract, a donation of paper by Amcor and the generosity of local printer and publisher Jenkin Buxton resulted in the production of 160,000 high quality brochures entitled What is Suicide? What is Depression? and Grief after Suicide. The brochures were distributed nationwide.

1999/2000 PRESIDENT JENNY WICKLAND

Jenny Wickland's election as the third female President in the ten year history of the club was a happy occasion.

However, on Monday 5 July, just one week after taking office, Jenny and her colleagues were deeply saddened by the untimely passing of Andrew Jackson, a Charter Member of the club and a Paul Harris Fellow. With his quick wit and humour, club meetings could never be a dull event. Andrew's loss is a severe blow to the club and we are committed to supporting Dorothy and Katrina in any way we can. We are pleased that Dorothy accepted the invitation to become an Honorary Member of the club.

Our visiting Exchange student Torunn arrived from Norway in July and our outgoing student Kathryn departed for the U.S. in January 2000.

A Sexual Harassment Hypothetical was a wonderful initiative and displayed the great skills of PP Murray Baird who was ably supported by Rotarians Helen Buckingham, Lesley Bell and Neil McMillan.

We were hosted by Numurkah Rotary club in an interesting Landcare promotion program.

A meeting with school Principals discussed key issues in schools and programs available through Rotary and we sent Christmas messages to East Timor and a Video for Australia Day which were well received.

Friendship Dinners were introduced with club members and partners enjoying hospitality in each other's homes.

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