

Closing Conference Speech 24/10/2010

Well it has been a busy few days, but of course the planning for this Conference started many months ago and I certainly hope that you have enjoyed what you have experienced during these few days.

What a superb venue for this event, I understand that another District has already made enquiries to hold their Conference at this beautiful Entertainment Centre, and whilst I will not embarrass myself by thanking every individual involved, for fear of leaving someone out, I will say a great big thank you to the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre Management and staff – of course this wonderful venue would have been unattainable without the support and sponsorship by the Shoalhaven City Council – my thanks to them also.

You have heard from a no frills RIPPR in Stuart Heal, the current RI Director for our Zone, he is a KIWI, but he certainly doesn't pull any punches and is part of the air of change currently whistling through the halls of Rotary International in Evanston, change not for the sake of change, but change very necessary for the survival of Rotary.

The Youth Exchange Program – another source of Members for Rotary, we just need to find them and reconnect them with the organisation that gave them a life changing experience, the message that was clearly delivered by PP Rohan Gleeson and Rachel Weaver.

And who can forget our first Keynote speaker, the cop in a bright suit, Deborah Wallace, I am glad that she is on our side, a truly inspiring speaker giving us a mixture of pathos and humour, I think we could have all listened to her stories for a lot longer.

Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) – what an amazingly motivated lady Wendy Stein is, a relatively new Rotarian that has achieved so much in such a short time, hat dedication, what a costume, what fantastic makeup – I understand that the girls from the NAC Choir helped her with her makeup, and most important WHAT A MESSAGE.

Our own PDG Phil Mewett and his moving and thought provoking presentation on the Rotary Foundation – our Charity, the engine room of Rotary, called a Foundation for good reason because it is the keystone that makes the many programs of Rotary happen. Please don't forget the two for one recognition available to you until the end of today, Chicago time.

A wonderful and refreshing presentation by two young ex RYPENIANS – Claire and Mellissa – RYPEN was not adopted as an official program of Rotary at the recent Council on Legislation, but I am convinced it will be accepted ultimately as an important adjunct to Rotary programs, you heard the girls speak of their transition from being participants to being leaders.

Of course we welcomed the GSE Team from D1870 in Germany, and as we have been able to witness, they are wonderful ambassadors of their country, and I thank the Clubs that have given them a taste of Australian life so far as well as having enhanced both their professional and cultural experiences. I

am sure that they will enjoy the remainder of their brief stay in our country and be well supported by the Clubs that will host them from here on. A complete and varied program organised by PDG Ian Sayers as District GSE Chair. Thank you to Gregor and his team, and I sincerely hope that you will enjoy the rest of your stay and share the experience with your family and friends upon your return, and perhaps as GSE Team members you may take a leaf out of Sarah Dawson book, and consider joining a Rotary Club in you area.

The future of Rotary at least in part must be with Rotaract, and it was so good to hear from Krystal Brown, and we are aiming to charter at least one more Rotaract Club in District 9710 in the near future. I hope that future Governors, Rob and Phil and beyond will think of and adopt more modern synonyms to Fellowship and the House of Friendship, let us ask the Rotaractors what works for them. I think I heard someone say the ROTARY EXPO.

We have featured KIWIS heavily at this Conference with Dr Ian Brooks – a past Ambassadorial Scholar through Rotary – and boy he too pulled no punches in telling Rotarians what they need to hear and to bring home the reality of renewal or extinction. Change is a MUST, but not for the sake of change alone – remember RI President Ray told us that it is wonderful to maintain traditions, but only if they are still relevant in today's world, if not THEN consider change and create some new traditions, more relevant in todays changing world.

We were informed by PDG Bob Aitken, the editor of the important and informative publication that all Rotarians read with great interest, he once again challenged us to ensure that we enable our Clubs to do what they have to do.

What an amazing talk of his experiences given to us by Ambassadorial Scholar Paul Lushenko. This is another of the programs of the Rotary Foundation funded by Rotarians and hopefully soon from Public appeal, as highlighted in PDG Phil address.

PP Terry Davies gave us yet again a wonderful insight into the activities of Australian Rotary Health, a great presentation – Multi District program and very worthy of support from all Clubs.

Now I know that we were all a little disappointed that our advertised speaker, David Foster, could not be with us due to family illness, but what an inspiring address by Ilyasi Siraji, a refugee from the Congo and Uganda, now making a life for himself in Australia since arriving here in 2007, his was indeed a poignant and touching story, and I would especially like to thank him for filling in at such short notice. Talk about hardships

We certainly enjoyed hearing from our outgoing GSE Teams led by Assistant Governor Anton Pemmer to China (the first of its kind) on Friday night and PP Peter Kain and his team on Saturday evening that went to Arizona. This is one of the wonderful programs of Rotary that should provide Clubs with a stock of future members; we just need to tap into the resource. It was something new that we tried by incorporating then into the social functions,

which I believe allowed us to be a little more generous with our time, and gave them a very attentive audience. Governors that have gone before and those that will follow will soon realise that there are always time pressures.

The 4-Way speaking contest has now been a feature of our Conference for a number of years, and the presentations are always of a very high standard and this year has been no exception, my thanks to DGN Phil Armstrong for putting this program together, and of course we must remember the teachers at the schools and colleges that encourage their students to participate to give them experience in public speaking. This contest is always interesting in the variety of topics and in the way that the 4-Way test is incorporated – and congratulations to all the participants, and particularly our winner was Lauren Pickering from the Nowra Anglican College. How professional these young people are not to have stumbled when interrupted by mobile phones ringing.

Let the Good times Roll Again, New Orleans is back bigger and better than ever before, those are the words that will draw us to this city in May 2011 to experience the rhythm and beat of this Convention. There is nothing better to give you an international perspective of Rotary than to attend an International Convention, and I think that PDG Greg Muldoon certainly gave us a taste of what is in store. Make New Orleans your destination from May 21 to 25, 2011.

Thank you also to our wonderful entertainers, Sirenics on Friday evening, Briannah Gorden on Saturday morning, the Nowra Anglican College Senior Vocal Ensemble, Scott Usback last night and of course just recently the

magnificent Shoalhaven City Pipes and Drums. Permit me a small advertisement, if you like the sound of bag pipes and mass bands, the Rotary Club of Berry-Gerringong will be staging its Celtic Festival again on 28 May, 2011 at the Berry Showground, and the funding raised as a result is earmarked for the Shoalhaven Linear Accelerator Appeal Project, and so far as a result of this project as well as general funding my Rotary Club has been able to raise just short of \$100K – and the main drivers are PP Col Hanbridge and his wife Dorothy.

As I said at the outset, I have been avoiding thanking many individuals for fear of offending someone by leaving them out, but thank you to all involved in organising this event, but special mention and thanks must be made to the Conference Committee, and the Conference Chair, a non Rotarian, but a Zontian, Barbara Smith. It was such a relief not to have to worry about anything to do with staging this event – thank you Barbara, your Conference MC's PP Denise and PDG Noel, you know there is a story here, when Noel rang me to offer some advice of what makes or breaks a Conference he said that you must have a good MC, to which I replied that I think I have that, and obviously he asked who, and I reminded him that I has asked him and Denise immediately after PDG's Phil Mewett's Conference in Sussex Inlet. I also need to thank our many sponsors some of whom have given us financial support, whilst others have given in kind support, and many of them are listed in our program, a couple who are not are Australian Rotary Health and they of course provided us with our wonderful Conference bags, and Bottles of Australia that provided the large drink bottles in your bags. It enabled the Conference Committee to go just that little bit further. Finally but of course in no way least I would like to thank my wife Mary for her work with the

Committee and for her untiring support to me, without which I would have been sunk, thank you Darling, many of you know that when I have spoken at your Clubs, that Mary is not a wife that sits at home and waits for the next Rotary meeting, she, in her own right is a very busy lady with her Community Involvement with ZONTA, with the Garden Club and its annual festival, the Berry Show Society, the Berry Chamber of Commerce and the Court House Conservation Committee, and with all that she still made time for me. She is my rock.

A little but of late mail, I can now confirm that I have received and email from RI that District 9710 has been successful in gaining a PR grant of \$A10,185 – now this is on a reimbursement basis, we need to spend the money and then RI will reimburse us, so not we are on the next rung to the National PR campaign, the charge being led by PDG Dick Garner.

Please travel home safely as you go on BUILDING COMMUNITIES and BRIDGING CONTINENTS and I look forward to catching up with many of you again during the rest of this year, thank you for coming and thank you for being here.