



of Rotary in Australia

The Rotary Club of South Brisbane Inc

Chartered 18 November 1939

Rotary International District 9630

Annual Report 2020 – 2021

International President 2020-2021

Holger Knaack

District 9630 Governor

Patrice Robinson

Club President

Roger Crawfoot

International President 2021-2022

Shekhar Metah

District 9620 Governor

Wendy Protheroe

Club President

Joe Thompson



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

Rotary theme 2021-2022

Background

For the last two years, it has been my privilege to lead the Rotary Club of South Brisbane as President. Shortly I will hand over to Past President Joe Thompson to lead the club into the newly formed Rotary District 9620.

I had previously been President in 2014-2015, and with a shortness of members again took on the role in July 2019. With the approval of the club, I continued as President until June 30th this year, the worldwide date on which Rotary clubs change office bearers.

The Rotary Club of South Brisbane

The club has a long history, having been chartered in October 1939. War had broken out, but the charter went ahead. It was a brave decision on the part of the members. They were a group of male professionals, perhaps beyond the age at which they would be called up for service, but theirs would have been an uncertain future.



This combined shops and flats development was built at 141 Boundary Street at the corner of Jane Street in 1939. It remains standing today.

Once a club with over 90 members, the club had gradually lost numbers over many years, declining to as few as five by June 2020. This Rotary year, however, has seen a significant reversal of the trend.

Historically, Rotary clubs were organized around various service activities – club, vocational, community, international and youth. In recent years there has been a focus on areas of commitment, and I will touch on this later.

Club Service

Venue: COVID-19 manifested itself in early 2020, and this had an immediate impact. There were restrictions brought on by social distancing that affected all aspects of club activity, from meetings to fund raising to service activities.

There were two immediate changes:

- Zoom became the medium for meeting;
- Our meetings at West End Community House (WECH) ceased;

In addition, meetings continued on a once a fortnight basis, appropriate to the size of the club as it now is. The opportunity to return to weekly meetings remains should the club decide.

Zoom was implemented with relatively little fuss. It certainly provided a valid alternative, albeit there was agreement that Zoom was not as nuanced as face-to-face contact. A further difficulty was the time limit of 40 minutes as we had chosen not to subscribe. Again, this could change in the future

The closure of WECH due to Covid restrictions meant that the club needed to look for a new meeting venue. There was a positive aspect to this. Members had long considered that although very supportive, there was a real question as to the suitability of the venue as a means of introducing prospective new Rotarians to the club.

As events unfolded a new venue was found.

The West End Hotel, previously the Melbourne, had been a meeting place for the club from 1975 to 1989. A chance meeting with the manager led to an arrangement whereby we can meet on a Monday evening in their function room, complete with AV gear, and on completion we head downstairs to the Bistro for a meal.



West End Hotel function room. We work from a simpler layout but the venue is ideal for meetings before we head to the Bistro.

More importantly, the restrictions had been lifted to the extent that a small club such as South Brisbane could meet on a regular basis. Voila! We have a professional meeting place, at no charge and a separation of meeting and dining.

Membership: Soon after our move to the West End Hotel, we were privileged to induct three new members. Simon Thomas, Phoebe Thomas and Courtney Vlanderer brought with them a Rotary background stretching back to Rotaract and prior to that to Interact, two youth programs that have long been a part of Rotary.

In the presence of District Governor Patrice Robinson, they were duly inducted. A fourth new member, Emma Parsons, will be formally inducted at our changeover celebration on July 19th, further highlighting the focus on youth in new membership in the club.



L to R: John Paskin, Simon Thomas, Judith John, Phoebe Thomas, Joe Thompson, Courtney Vlaanderen, Roger Crawford

Credit for this must go to our incoming President Joe Thompson, who initiated the Rotaract Club of South Brisbane in 2002, and has nurtured and encouraged members throughout that time. Joe's efforts saw him recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow by South Brisbane Rotaract, a significant achievement.

The club is proud to have, as an honorary member, Wilfred Thomas (Willie) Prince. Uncle Willie Prince is an Aboriginal man of Kalkatungu heritage born on Wakka Wakka country, at what was then the Aboriginal mission at Cherbourg.

Willie is very proactive in both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the disability sector. He has a key role in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland, as well as serving on numerous boards in the community.

Wheelchair bound almost since birth, Willie has excelled in wheelchair sports as well as spending 35 years as a member of the kuril dhagun team at the State Library of Queensland before his retirement in late 2019.

In 1983 he participated in the Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) and for some years was a member of Rotaract in Bundaberg.

Diversity: The Rotary of today would not be recognized by its charter members of 1939. In 1989 women were accepted into Rotary membership, and South Brisbane Rotary inducted its first female member in 1999. With two women in our expanded group, in addition to our long serving Past President Judith John, we can now show a female membership of 33%. With the coming induction of a new member this will increase to 40%.

The opportunity to engage with the Indigenous community in West End remains a priority for the club.

Financial: The club incurred an unaudited operating loss of \$3432.96 for the year ending 30th June 2021. Although a considerable improvement on the previous year, the outcome reflects the difficulty for a small club in fund raising during COVID-19.

The accounts are currently with the auditor and will be tabled when available.

Visitors

In addition to the Governor's visit by D9630 District Governor Patrice Robinson, D9620 DGE Wendy Protheroe visited as a guest to regale us with stories of her experience as D9600 District Governor.

Awards

There is always a concern that Paul Harris Fellow Recognition might not be appreciated by a non-Rotarian recipient, however it was felt that this would not be the case with Maria Grounds-Lieu. As an Inclusion Teacher at Yeronga State High School, Maria is responsible for the school's Interact program.

In a school with a student body of almost 50% overseas ethnicities, Maria has developed a core of around 30 Interactors from Year 7 to Year 12. They impress with their commitment and enthusiasm. A member of the group is a school Co-Captain this year.

Community Service

Restrictions again limited on the ground activity, but the club ensured small donations. The Rotary Foundation, Donations in Kind, Shelterbox, Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children and Australian Rotary Health were the recipients.

Part of our financial contribution to the Rotary Foundation was in support of the team from a number of clubs in Districts 9600, 9630 and 9640 who participated in Ride the Train. This was a fundraiser in aid of the Foundation's End Polio Now program, and raised around \$60,000. Our President Elect, Joe Thompson participated.

It is important to note that when Rotary adopted the program to end polio worldwide in 1988 there were around 360,000 cases annually. This year to date there have been two recorded cases of wild polio.

2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the first Rotary club in Australia.

In conjunction with Yeronga State High School the club had agreed to proceed with the development of a peace garden in conjunction with the Yeronga Community Garden team, and the Rotaract Club of South Brisbane.

The aim is to complement work already carried out, and provide a lasting reminder of the close association between Rotary and the school. For a variety of reasons, this activity has been put on hold, but with support of our incoming President, it is hoped to revitalize the activity later in 2021.

Vocational Service

The club's focus in this area has been on the Essential Services Awards Dinner. Every year, representatives of the Police, Fire and Emergency and Ambulance Services are invited to nominate personnel who have distinguished themselves through performance above and beyond the call of duty.

Normally the event would have been held in August, but this was prevented by COVID-19 restrictions. Accordingly, the event was put back to April 2021. The evening was a great success, and the new time will be retained in the future as it provides more distance between itself and the Children's Picnic later in the year.

Past President John Paskin and his team are to be congratulated on again arranging an excellent evening.



Angela Knee – a QFES recipient

International Service

Rotary Australia World Community Service and its offshoot, Donations in Kind have for many years been the passion of our Past President John Paskin. John has occupied senior regional and District roles for many years.

Where possible club members have supported this activity in areas as diverse as sorting and delivering books, and medical and other supplies, and loading containers, for delivery overseas.



Packing books at Mater Medical Centre library
to be shipped overseas by DIK

Youth Service

It is in this area that the club has focused most attention., both personally by members, and financially.

Children's Picnic: This year will mark the 74th picnic for Special Needs children. Held at Wellington Point Foreshore, the event sees up to 400 children and their carers, from special schools throughout the Greater Brisbane area gather for a day of rides on the police barge, rubber duckies, police cars, and jeeps, together with a look over an ambulance and fire engine.

For only the second time in its history, the event was cancelled due to COVID-19 in 2020. The first time was when rain stopped the event.

The event places demand on our club, and with minimal numbers available on a weekday, participation by other clubs and community entities is increasingly sought. Nevertheless, planning is in place to make the 2021 picnic a successful one.

Rotaract: Although now a club in its own right, South Brisbane Rotaract was a project of Joe Thompson back in 2002. Joe has maintained close contact with the club since it was chartered, and his efforts saw him recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow with Sapphire by South Brisbane Rotaract.



Rotaract Charter night 2002 – Joe Thompson prominent

Interact This activity caters for high school students from Year 7 to Year 12. Our direct involvement is with Yeronga State High School, where there are around 30 members supervised by Inclusion Teacher Maria Growsn-Lieu.

For the first time in many years, a District Interact seminar was held. The venue was the Grantham Butter Factory, itself a Rotary project following disastrous floods, and around 50 Interactors attended, accompanied by supervisors, Rotarians and Rotaractors. Club member Phoebe Thomas, together with District Chair Ishbel Taylor was instrumental in organizing a tremendous day. Over 15 Interactors from Yeronga High attended, exemplifying the enthusiasm generated by their supervisor.



Phoebe Thomas (L) and Ishbel Taylor



The refurbished Grantham butter factory – opening day 2013

Santos Science Experience The club sponsored one participant and another was sponsored by South Brisbane Rotaract. As it happened, the participants were two brothers, the Saeed twins, from a family that emigrated from Syria. The activity was organized by Simon Thomas in conjunction with Yeronga SHS.

RYLA: The Rotary Youth Leadership Award is a weeklong program for 18 to 28 year old participants. Two recent participants nominated by South Brisbane Rotary, Jarien Long and Aurora O’Neill have progressed to leadership roles within the group. We nominated Torrey Paton for 2021, but again COVID-19 interfered and the event was postponed.

RYPEN: Rotary Youth program of Enrichment is a residential camp for young people aged 14 – 16, intended for participants to develop a greater sense of self-awareness, an appreciation of diversity in society and to realise their own and others’ potential. We had one candidate from Yeronga SHS participate.

RYTS: The Regional Youth Transition Seminar is a week-long residential camp which aims to empower school graduates for the serious game of life. We had one candidate from Yeronga SHS participate.

Phoebe Thomas is to be congratulated on her involvement in all youth programs, activity which has seen her appointed as Emerging Services Director for the newly merged District 9620, with Simon Thomas responsible for RYTS.

Leadership Development

At a time when many clubs had trouble identifying a President for the next Rotary year, PP Joe Thompson was ready and willing to take the Rotary Club of South Brisbane into our new combined District 9620 for the 2021-22 Rotary year.

Furthermore, with three, shortly to be four new members, it has been possible to identify a President Nominee for the 2022-23 Rotary year – Simon Thomas, and leadership development can proceed apace.

The club will continue to support leadership development programs at the District level

Awards and Recognition

In early July it was my privilege to be awarded the District 9630 Commendable Service Award for my work with Australian Rotary Health. In 2020 the same award was given to John Paskin for his work with DIK and RAWCS.

No pressure on the membership for next year, but it shows the commitment of the members not only to the club but to the wider Rotary community.

Outside Activity

Club members are encouraged to participate in Rotary and community activity outside the club. John Paskin is heavily involved with RAWCS/DIK, Joe Thompson with Rotaract, Judith John in a variety of Rotary and community activities, Phoebe Thomas with Interact and RYTS, Simon Thomas with The Science Experience and RYTS while I am a Director of Australian Rotary Health, as well as the editor of the recently published D9630 History “Making a Difference”.

What this means is that we are exposed to other clubs, other Rotarians and the wider community. This enhances our Rotary participation and raises our personal credibility as well as that of the club.

Unfinished Business

Inevitably, and with the best of intentions, things that were on the agenda do not get completed. I list a few of them here in the hope that with the support of the club they might yet be addressed.

R100: The Peace Garden at Yeronga State High School was discussed earlier.

Probus: Yeronga Probus was chartered on 14th March 1989, sponsored by South Brisbane Rotary, as a women's club to complement the men's Probus club already in existence. Ultimately the men's club was absorbed into what is now a vibrant Probus club with 51 active members.

We had made contact with the club in 2019, but COVID-19 prevented regular interaction. As with Rotaract and Interact, although we have no formal involvement, it is important that we maintain contact.

Bunnings: This year we hosted our first sausage sizzle at Bunnings for a number of years. Joe Thompson was instrumental in getting the day up and running, and the key now is to make our club a regular participant. Bunnings remains an important fundraising opportunity, in addition to their support of the ARH "Lift the Lid" program during Mental Health Week in October.

Post COVID-19: With a number of activities postponed, such as RYLA and RYPEN, it is important that we do not lose sight of their importance, and our need to continually support them.

Membership: This will always be unfinished business, both recruitment and retention. With an 80% increase in 2020-21, due in no small way to Joe Thompson's efforts, we must ensure that the club remains vibrant and interesting in order that we can continue to maintain and grow numbers.

Finally, my thanks to all members, and their families, and to the wider Rotary community for their support over the last two years. COVID-19 presented its challenges, but there was always an optimistic attitude in the club that said we could continue, even with the constraints presented.

Yours in Rotary Service

Roger Crawfoot

Roger Crawfoot

President 2019 – 2021

Rotary Club of South Brisbane inc