

COMMUNITY NETWORKER

ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY, DISTRICT 9675

Rotary Four-Way Test

The Four-Way Test challenges Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask themselves:

Of the things we say or do:

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

Meeting 24 August 2015

Our Toast

Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Zagreb, Croatia, which was chartered in 1928 but which had its membership of Rotary International cancelled after World War 11 but which was re-established along with four other Croatian Rotary Clubs in 1992. A history of Rotary in Europe states that the Rotary clubs in Croatia have committed themselves supporting people suffering from the Balkan wars and has otherwise attended to the needs of the disabled, to schools and medical facilities. Rotary has replanted a forest and has looked for other ways of serving the distressed people of Croatia. Bob also pointed to the work of a Serbian immigrant to the United States, Nikola. Tesla was an inventor, electrical engineer, physicist and futurist best known for his contribution to the design of the modern alternating current electrical supply system. Tesla developed a motor that revolutionised the electricity industry and is responsible for the electricity that we enjoy today in our own homes.

Our Guest

President Malcolm introduced our guest, Peter Consandine, national executive director and “bankroller” of the Republican Party of Australia, which Peter founded 33 years ago and for which he has worked full-time since 2009. A former mediator, refiner and mortgage broker, Peter has researched Australiana, revived some of its cultural traditions such as Wattle Day and pushes on for the proclamation of an Australian Republic, an event he concedes is not “inevitable”, but pursued by a movement which is “inexorable”.



Peter Consandine

Presidential Address

President Malcolm said that in view of the regrettable departure of Steve Burfield in three weeks it was necessary for club members to consider his replacement on the board to take over Steve's briefs of Membership and Public Relations.

He said the Friend of Lambs of Lamb Australia (FOLIA) meeting he and his wife had attended at Normanhurst at the weekend with Bob and Glenys Rosengreen had been successful and the auction on the night had raised almost \$6,000 for the LAMB project in Bangla Desh. And Glenys had won the lucky door prize.

Regarding the proposed Sydney Welsh Choir concert next year, which the club intends to sponsor, the hire costs of the Riverside Theatre at about \$6,000 for the Sunday afternoon rule that out. But it is possible to negotiate a local school where we could possibly hold the concert in conjunction with the school choir.

Malcolm said that in pursuit of his own brief to consolidate club relations, he intended to visit the Holroyd Rotary Club on Monday evening next week.,

Ray Reed

Information to the club is that Ray has had a bout of pneumonia but is recovering;. We wish him well.

Honda

A message from Honda is that he is active in Africa, doing community work and presently trying to educate the people in Congo in preparation for the forthcoming election. He is going

to go to Liberia in mid-September to help with the ebola problem. Honda has noticed that there is a Rotary club in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia.

Our Anniversary

PP Keith points out that Saturday night is the 43rd anniversary of the club's charter night in 1972 and we should celebrate that at our next meeting.

Bravehearts

The club has received a letter from Superintendent Wayne Cox, commander of the Parramatta Local Area Command, seeking support from our club for the second Brave Hearts Charity Ball at Rooty Hill RSL Club on Saturday, 17 October. The support would be in the form of donations for raffles and auctions which would be conducted on the night. Superintendent Cox said last year's ball raised more than \$59,000 which allowed Bravehearts to continue its fatal work of child protection. Anything members could give to the event would be greatly appreciated. Contact for anyone able to donate is Inspector Robert Toynton, Human Resources, Parramatta Local Area Command, 95 Marsden St, Parramatta, NSW, 2150. E-mail: toyn1rob@police.nsw.gov.au. Phone: 9633 0629

The Push for a Republic

Peter Consandine said that though the national referendum in 1999 for a Republic of Australia had resulted in a vote to retain our Constitutional Monarchy (a 55/45 vote), that was not the end of the matter and the question would come again. He said there were certain events internationally and nationally which he regarded as "catalysts" which were furthering the republican cause.

One catalyst was the decision in New Zealand to change its national flag. There would be a plebiscite to decide between some alternatives – a procedure, he said, which allowed Australians to choose their national anthem. Another was the referendum in Scotland last year on the question of their country leaving the United Kingdom. The result had been close: 55 percent in favour of remaining within the United Kingdom, 45 percent against, which paralleled the Australian republican vote of 15 years before.

There had been independence movements elsewhere, in particular Catalonia which had held a non-binding referendum last year on the question of separation from Spain. Of those who voted, more than 80 percent, on media estimates, had voted for Catalonia to become an independent state.

Within Australia, Wattle Day, which had fallen out of favour during the Menzies period, had been revived in 1992 and was continuing to this day. There would be an annual Wattle Day luncheon at Old Government House in Parramatta Park on September 1 where the eminent social researcher, Hugh Mackay, would speak on the top of "The Art of Belonging". The centenary of Anzac had come in April this year, which reinforced the national pride of Australians.

"It has been said many times that a republic is inevitable," Peter said. "We have heard that Charles Windsor has said that the republicans may be right. The Queen has said on a number

of occasions she is going to stay in the job till the end of the line. So we know that a republic is not inevitable but inexorable.”

Peter said that last year, Prime Minister Tony Abbott has inadvertently boosted the republican cause by adding a British imperial element to the Australian Honours system and awarding Prince Phillip a knighthood. Next year an Australian knighthood was likely to be bestowed on Prince Charles. It had been mooted that the next Australian Governor-General would be Prince Harry. What a catalyst that would be!

Peter wondered whether the Queen should remain in her present role. He had even written to the Queen suggesting that she take “early retirement”. The reply from one of her representatives was that she would stay on to the end. But it should be noted that in the last two years the Queen of Belgium and the Kings of the Netherlands and Spain had abdicated. Peter had told the Australian Republicans that they should “get their act together” to ensure that before the Queen did go, Australia should not get its 10th monarch.

If Australia did get such a monarch, in the form of King Charles 111, present indications suggested it would not be easy. Publication of letters Prince Charles had written to 27 British ministers indicated how “interventionist” he was and that did not bode well for the future if he were King of Australia.

Peter added that there were serious questions anyway about the propriety of members of the British royal family, one being the conduct and outspoken remarks of Prince Philip over the years. There was the question of Charles’s marriage to Camilla Parker-Bowles, giving rise to questions, explored by a “collective of academics” as to whether Charles was entitled to succeed his mother. There had even been questions raised in social media about the propriety of Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge.

He said the retort of constitutional monarchists that Australia had “had its referendum” did not wash. The result had been close, and three months prior to the 1999 referendum the indications were that there would be a 55/45 percent vote in favour of a republic. There had been a major issue over the dismissal of a president and there had been a brilliant campaign by Tony Abbott which had reversed the expected result.

Now, he said, Australian republicans were moving on again. The acclaimed author Peter Fitzsimons was now chairman of the Australian Republican Movement and was to speak to the National Press Club on the advantages of an Australian Republic. The second time, he said, the republican campaign would not “fall”, that failure to carry would not be an option.

Peter’s address brought strong reactions from club members. Gregg Kearns, an avowed republican, said he thought the idea of a constitutional monarchy was “ridiculous” but Natalie Cowell raised the question as to whether in becoming a republic we would be denying or heritage. President raised the point that Australian blood had been shed in several wars in support of British monarchs and that could not lightly be set aside.

PDG Barry Antees said he thought the issue in the debate should be patriotism, rather than individual criticisms of the royal family. Peter said nobody was getting “stuck into” the Queen, but she was “not Australian” and when she went abroad she was not promoting Australian things like tourism, trade and technological transfer.

There were plenty of Australians who could handle the job of head of state. Bill Hayden, when he had become governor-general, had shown how seamlessly one could move from politics into such a role. An Australian could represent Australia abroad in a way the Queen was not doing and there were huge advantages to the country that would flow from that. He felt that the next time a referendum was held on republicanism, the people who had voted against it last time might now be inclined to “vary their vote.” Gregg Kearns thanked Peter for his address, on behalf of the club.

Presidential Comment

As club president I am loath to make any personal observations or state any position in the Bulletin, but the issues raised by Peter are not new. I might quote from a chapter by historian G.L.Buxton in *A New History of Australia*, edited by Frank Crowley:

The Sydney Republican Union of 1887 became the Republican League in 1888 with branches in Adelaide and Melbourne; its aim was a federation of Australia colonies under republican rule. Essentially, republicans rejected royalty, criticised inequality and hereditary privilege, titles and a stratified society. In 1886 A.S.Bailes, an “almost native” publican and Bendigo member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, said in debate that while he had nothing against the Queen, he hoped the monarchy would be extinguished when she died. Moreover the character of the Prince of Wales was not high. He had always been mixed up in scandal wherever he had gone.

Malcolm Brown

For Your Diaries

August 31. Gregg Kearns to be inducted as a Rotarian. Craig Jennings of Samaritans Purse to speak.

September 1. 10th Annual Wattle Day Luncheon at Lachlan’s Restaurant, Old Government House

September 7. We will be hearing from Zyra McAuliffe.

September 14. Archaeologist Dr Michael Bendon will speak.

September 18. District Presidents Meeting

September 21. We will hear from Eric Stanley, motivational speaker and author.

October 11. Bunnings barbecue

October 18. Triathlon Pink Barbecue