

ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY Inc. DISTRICT 9675

www.parramattacityrotary.org.au

Rotary Four Way Test

The Four Way Test challenges Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask of 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 18th April 2016

Our Toast

Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Cardiff, which was to celebrate the centenary of its foundation. He pointed out that the club, formed during World War 1, was in a country that lost 35,000 men in the war, out of a population of three million, where the services of Rotary were badly needed.

Our Guest

President Malcolm introduced Dr Michael Chamberlain, father of Azaria Chamberlain, taken by a dingo at Ayers Rock in 1980, who along with his then wife Lindy had suffered the most brutal treatment by the public, the media and the legal system, but had emerged to remarry, gain a PhD and re-establish himself in life with his head held high. He had suffered another devastating blow five years ago when his second wife, Ingrid, suffered a crippling stroke, making him a full-time carer. But again he had emerged with his head held high, and was now undertaking post-doctoral studies and seeking a much better deal for carers of the profoundly and seriously disabled.

RYPEN

President Malcolm said Nicholas Polites, about to turn 15, was a bit shy about coming to talk about his RYPEN experience and would have to come with his mother Vera.

PDG Barry

PDG Barry, fresh from a bout of high blood pressure and some other complications, was back on deck, not entirely out of the woods but flashing his bright, engaging smile which his mother says he has worn from childhood.

The Concert

President Malcolm expressed appreciation to all who had helped with the Sydney Welsh Choir concert on April 17, at the Futter Hall at The King's School. The audience of about 150 was very



appreciative. It could have been larger but with \$2,500 in the kitty we covered its costs and had something left to give to the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. Malcolm said this might be a precursor to an annual event. Many thanks to Ben Jackson and the Hills Community Aid for providing a coffee van which parked outside the Futter Hall and did a brisk service providing coffee.



Membership

The Parramatta Daybreak Rotary Club is in the throes of deciding whether it should be folded, given a drastic decline in numbers. Bob Rosengreen and John Stamboulie attended its meeting last week. The club is to hold a critical meeting this week at the presbytery in Eastwood, hosted by the club

president, Martin Maunsell, and there might be a decision to seek amalgamation with one of the other two Parramatta clubs.

Michael Chamberlain

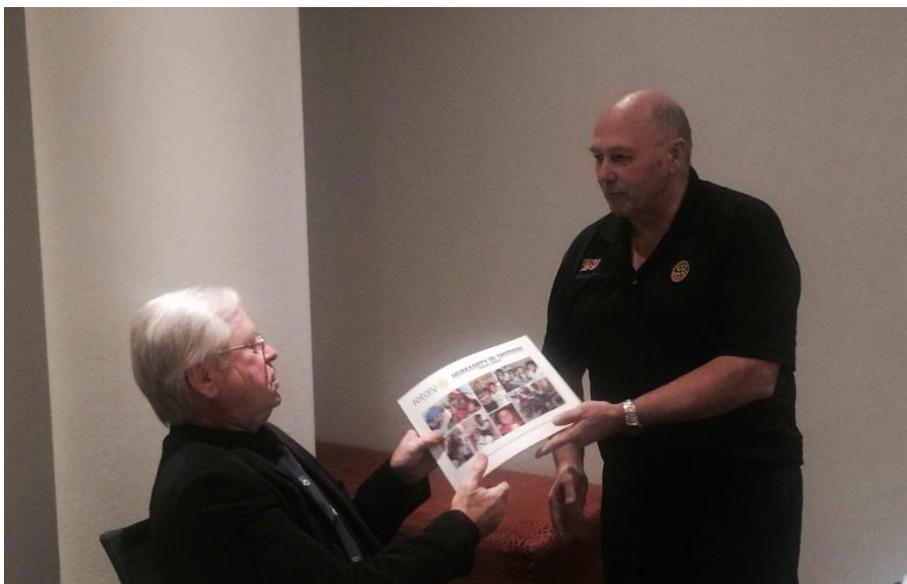
Michael did not dwell on the dark chapters of his life, except to say that if he were ever in a position to legislate the Australia, he would lay down the law that nobody should ever be allowed to hold an opinion unless they were equipped with the facts.

Michael's focus was now on carers. He said that 2.7 million Australians fitted into that category, and 800,000 of them were primary carers. There were 330,000 of those who cared for profoundly or seriously disabled people, and he was one of those. It was not widely known that such carers suffered serious stresses, so much so that in a study of 25 carers, eight of them had been on suicide watch. These people, he said, were at risk of dying before those they were looking after.

It was only in recent times that there had been much attention to the disabled at all. One step forward had been the Disability Discrimination Act of 1992. In past centuries the disabled had been set aside and had been classified along with criminals and the poor in the forming of social policy.

When Michael questioned club members on their own concepts of disability, PE Phil Brophy said there appeared to be a distinction in the attitude towards people born with a disability and people deemed to have brought in on themselves. Secretary Joy said there was perhaps a distinction in the public mind between those suffering from a physical disability and those suffering from an intellectual or mental disability. Ben Jackson, who had worked with the disabled, said that for the disabled, they did not consider themselves as abnormal at all. They were, within their own framework, normal.

Michael said his focus was on those who had to care for their recipients on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week. People on the outside would not want to go near the subject of caring for the profoundly or seriously disabled because it involved too much time and effort and they had other things to do. Unless someone was drawn into that situation, he or she did not really think about it at all. "But I consider myself to be a very fortunate man now looking after a woman with profound disability," he said. "Despite the despair and the loss of intimacy – and I have seen justice at its very



worst – I say I am a fortunate man and I can still say I have had a fortunate life," he said Why? "Because I have seen triumph over adversity. I have had people in the highest places give me advice and I have been associated with wise people."

Michael, now caring for his wife, had

started doing research on the conditions of people in his situation and hoped to bring about some improvements for them. Early last year representatives of the National Disability Insurance Australia had come into his home and given him a helpful support package and this had made it possible for him to go back to Newcastle University, where he had gained his PhD in history, and do research on profound disability. How could life be made more fulfilling for full-time carers? How could they be helped to have better relationships with the recipients of their care?

Michael said that having a core of people prepared to be full-time carers of the profoundly and seriously disabled saved the government a lot of money. He estimated throughout Australia this amounted to \$10 billion. But these people were neglected and serious undervalued. He felt what was needed was a study that covered the whole question of people in Australia who were in that situation. He believe that all people seeking to be full-time carers should go through a period of training just as staff did at hospitals because the always should be the same for everyone. The home of a profoundly or seriously disabled person was virtually a mini-hospital where the same standards of hygiene should apply.

He thought full-time carers should get some financial aid, even those in his category where he did not pass the means test. If he were not a full-time carer, he said, he would be working and earning. Some carers gave up huge earning capacity. Working in the home, they were not deemed to be professional but they were doing the same work as professionals.

PDG Barry thanked Michael for his talk.

For Your Diaries

22 April. Charter night for the Rotaract Club of Western Sydney University This will be at the Liverpool Catholic Club.

25 April. ANZAC Day – No meeting

2 May Club Meeting Natalie Poschl – Rebound Exchange student ‘My year of living in Germany’

7 May. District Assembly at Greystanes High School. All incoming Board members

17 May. Board meeting of the Parramatta City Rotary Club.