

## COMMUNITY NETWORKER No 15/2017

### ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY Inc. DISTRICT 9675

[www.parramattacityrotary.org.au](http://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?

*Club Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017*

#### Our Toast

Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Corfu, a Greek island where Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark was born on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1921. The club was formed in 2011 by the existing Greek-speaking clubs in Corfu, whose goal was to invite and encourage membership for the English-speaking community, so that all might engage in charitable causes and projects. Bob said Prince Philip, who caused a flurry of publicity recently when he decided he could no longer keep up the pace of his royal duties, was “standing down because he cannot stand up”.

#### Our Guests

President Phil welcomed out guests, Deborah Homewood, chief executive officer of MAX Solutions, an organisation that has delivered employment, health and training contracts for government for hundreds of thousands of Australians since 2002. Deborah was wanting to talk about the idea of Rotarians becoming involved in her program as mentors. Deborah is a member and past president of the Rotary Club of Sydney Cove. Deborah is a graduate of the Graduate School of Management at Macquarie University She started her career as a registered nurse in Queensland, then spent 25 years in telecommunications. Her last job, which she held for 10 years, was chief executive officer of a company called Pacnet, which is involved in submarine cables.



Guests Sher Khan & Deborah Homewood with President Phil

Our second guest was Sher Khan, who is chief executive officer of an Australian multicultural charity. He migrated from Pakistan 45 years ago and married a Lebanese-born woman whom he met in Auburn. Having come from Pakistan as a devout Muslim, and marrying a “moderate” Christian, he had shown that a marriage in these circumstances could succeed. They had not discussed religion at home but he had been to church. She was now suffering from lymphatic cancer and he was now her carer.

In 1969, Sher had joined the judiciary in Pakistan but had been appalled by the level of corruption he found there. No honest judge could afford to feed his family, but a dishonest judge could live well. He decided at that point that he would migrate. He had worked as an importer and exporter and as a manufacturer of leather and textile goods. Also a citizen of New Zealand, he had represented Australia and New Zealand in trade exhibitions in the 1980s and 1990s. At the peak of his business career he had had 12 handicraft shops in Sydney, Tasmania and Melbourne.

Now he had retired, Sher he wanted to give as much as possible. He had studied immigration law at the University of Western Sydney and had become an immigration consultant. He provided legal advice to people who could not afford to pay. He gave advice on domestic violence situations if someone has a problem.” I would like to work with you guys,” he said. Sher belonged to a Satellite Rotary Club in Pakistan. He had given a building he owned in Pakistan, worth \$3 million, to charity. One of the things he wanted to contribute to was the improvement of water and sanitation in Pakistan. “If I go from this world, I don’t want anything in my bank account,” he said.

### **Our Largesse**

At the board meeting on Tuesday, Treasurer Keith Henning informed us that we had \$11,739 to be allocated. It was decided we distribute \$10,000 and keep the rest to go into next year’s pool. Of the money to be allocated, New Zealand marathon walker Peter Watson gets \$500 for his campaign against slavery; the Rotary Foundation gets \$4,000, which will take in the \$US2650 all Rotary clubs have been asked to contribute to the foundation in its centenary year; \$750 to FOLIA; \$750 to Days for Girls; \$750 to our sister club, Ramon Magsaysay in the Philippines; \$750 to St Peter’s School in Uganda and \$2,500 to Australian Rotary Health.

### **The Top Blokes Foundation**

At Monday’s club meeting, President Phil said that Parramatta High School, where our club has a close connection, had received a grant of \$10,000 for participation in a Top Blokes program. Another grant of \$10,000 had gone for a Top Blokes program at Dapto High School. He thanked PDG Barry Antees for his thinking at the last meeting which had made these grants possible. Barry said that Dapto High School, with which the Dapto Rotary Club had a strong relationship, had a special class for students afflicted with autism. At next Monday’s lunch, CUA will present the club with a cheque for that money.

### **Parramatta Daybreak Changeover**

This will be on 16<sup>th</sup> June at the Muirfield Golf Club at North Rocks. It coincides with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the club. Club members are urged to let Joy know if they are going. Cost is \$70 per person. Those who would like to go are urged to contact Secretary Joy.

### **Rotary Club of St Mary’s Changeover**

President Cheryl Deguara and President-elect Dave Humphrey, of the Rotary Club of St Marys, invite members to the club's Changeover on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June at the Twin Creeks Golf Club at 2-8 Twin Creeks Drive, Luddenham. It will be a 6.30 for 7 pm start. There will be a two-course meal for \$35 at the cash bar. Members are asked to RSVP by 19<sup>th</sup> June to [l.daly@bigpond.net.au](mailto:l.daly@bigpond.net.au).

## **MAX Solutions**

PE Natalie Cowell, introducing Deborah Homewood, said she had been thinking that as a Rotary club in Sydney's west, she had wondered whether the club could assist MAX Solutions. MAX Solutions was looking for a government grant and Natalie was wanting to know whether we could be of assistance in that.

Deborah said MAX Solutions worked with the Commonwealth Government. Employers in both the profit and not-for-profit sectors were being approached to see whether they could offer employment. Some employers were national operations, the others were in small geographical areas. MAX Solutions had many activities, one of which was operating an indigenous employment program in Queensland. One of MAX Solutions program was called Jobactive, whose brief was to support job seekers and employers with sustainable employment. There were 150,000 clients on the program, which needed professionals such as occupational therapists and psychologists to assist. There were about 150,000 people on the Disability Employment Program. These included people who had had an injury, others who might perhaps be recovering from cancer. People with mental illness might need support all their lives. "We have to find them work and support them in the workplace," she said.

The aim of MAX Solutions was to get people into work and keep them in work. There were hundreds of thousands of people on its programs in Australia. About 50 percent of them were "job ready". Others had some preparation to go, and some had to deal with issues such as illiteracy, mental illness and homelessness. There was a self-help model for the first three months of someone coming onto the program. "We believe that the best therapy is to get people employed," Deborah said. We are not there to provide them with housing. We believe that getting someone well is getting them a job. Though some people will never get well. Some of the barriers include anxiety, which can be diagnosed as a mental health problem when the anxiety has really come from long-term unemployment. If a woman walks into a job interview and bursts into tears, that is not a good start."

Female imprisonment was rising in Australia, and that put women in difficult circumstances because their children were taken from them and when they were released they could not get their children back. The first thing you want is to see your children, then you look for work, which is very difficult. "You must have a driver's licence and have a clean bill of health and be fully literate," she said. "These women start to get desperate. They cannot find a home and they are often in domestic violence situations. Within two years 90 percent of them are back in gaol." But if these women were subjected to positive intervention to improve their conditions in life, 50 percent of them stayed out of gaol forever.

"What we need for this to work is to change community attitudes to have employers prepared to work with our clients," she said. "It occurs to me as a Rotarian that there are thousands of us going round keen to do something different," she said. "Why are we not talking to clubs about mentoring. We can get mentors in and that mentoring can be just a phone call. That is just a phone call, even if they are in prison. If they fall out of work, you say, 'Why aren't you at work?' They don't have a support group that sorts things out. She said MAX Solutions could use grant money to pay Rotary clubs to do this type of work in the community. It was something a club could offer as a volunteer

program for new members. There were a range of pro-active measures that could be taken to solve long-term employment and mentoring was one of them.

PP Malcolm Brown raise the problem of people who were of criminal inclination would could be violent or disruptive or exploit a well-meaning mentor. Deborah said the MAX Solutions was very mindful of safety and privacy and of the many thousands of deserving clients, there was only a tiny minority who caused trouble. The “overwhelming majority of clients” were genuine. PP John Surian raised the objection that a Rotarians job was really to provide funding and support for organization who dealt with these social issues at the coalface rather than doing the job themselves. Deborah said that Rotary should not stand still but should look to doing new and innovative things.

President Phil thanked Deborah for her presentation He praised her as someone who was “passionate in representing the underdog. The underdog, he said, “comes in all shapes and sizes”. He asked Deborah to send us something in writing so that we might consider it further.

### **For Your Diaries**

25 May. Rotary – MyJourney – MyRotary, 6pm -9pm. For new members and mentors

26 May. Presidents Meeting

27-28 May, RAWCS Eastern Region Meeting at Belmont

16 June. Rotary Club of Parramatta Daybreak, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner & Changeover

26 June. Club Changeover – Novotel Hotel

1 July. Parramatta Rotary Changeover Bookings <https://www.trybooking.com/277591>

2 July, District 9685 Changeover. 12 noon. St George Motor Boat Club

10 July. Police Officer of Year event.

15 July. Volunteers’ day at Minchinbury.

2 September. Sydney Welsh Choir Concert at St Kevin’s Church, Eastwood