

ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY Inc. DISTRICT 9675

www.parramattacityrotary.org.au

COMMUNITY NETWORKER No 38/2017-8

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 7th May 2018

Our Toast: Bob Rosengreen toasted RC Cape Canaveral to recognise Australia's re-entry (pun unintended!) into the 'Space Race'.

Guest Speaker - Ralf Schroers – MicroLend Australia Ltd was welcomed to the meeting by President Natalie.

REPORTS

President Natalie advised that 14 & 21 May meetings have been set aside as 'Membership Meetings'.

She also advised that a Board meeting would be held at Phillip Brophy's office at 4.30pm on Tuesday 15th May.

Treasurer - Barry Antees advised that some members still have not paid their annual fees – Barry will send Eugene around to discuss a 'payment schedule'.

He also advised Paul Harris Fellow Awards are available on payment of donations commencing at \$100.

Director John Stamboulie reported that the Police Officer of The Year 2018 awards function will be held on 30 July. The venue is at Novotel Hotel.

Director Keith Henning advised that Merrylands High School will be attending MUNA with the role of representing Germany.

Entries for the National Youth Science Forum close on 31 May.

GUEST SPEAKER – RALF SCHROERS (MICROLEND)

Ralf introduced himself as 'a retired multi-millionaire' who, on had a 'road to Damascus' moment during a homily at his church when he was thinking about how he could put his good fortune, as a businessman, to use to help others.

His credo is “it’s easy to make money, but much harder to spend it productively”. He believes that the value of money is in what you do with it. Using it to lift other people out of poverty is a greater reward than anything that the money can buy.



Ralf Schroers

Using his skills, as an Accountant and Financial Adviser, he established MicroLend as a medium to collect money through donations to facilitate the provision of business skills training for people and seeding their establishment of micro businesses in countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya, Pakistan, India, Mongolia and the Philippines.

Repayments, including a small amount of interest, are recycled to fund the next generation of micro-loans. Profits of each of the businesses remain the reward for the business owners and they are, generally, reinvested to refine and expand their businesses.

Some mind focussing statistics that Ralf relayed to us included: -

1 billion people have less than \$1/day to live on;

Our planet’s population is, roughly, 7 billion unique, special individuals;

3 billion of these people live below the statistical ‘poverty line’;

220 thousand children die each day of preventable illness or starvation.

The compounding of small donations from people of more economically privileged communities enables the lives of many families to be changed and, in turn, enables communities to become sustainable.

MicroLend Australia’s main aim is to work towards the ending of world poverty through charitable works by setting up small businesses and to provide microfinance to the poor to establish them.

MicroLend Australia Ltd currently supports microfinance centres in Zimbabwe (4 sites), Kenya, Uganda, Pakistan, Mongolia, Cambodia, The Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

Typically, MicroLend has funded the establishment of chicken farms with a small amount to enable the purchase of a dozen, or so, chicks. Reinvestment of the money made from the eggs and chicken meat produced enabling the purchase of more chicks and, even, the breeding of their own. Similarly, this has occurred in the establishment of fish farms and 'bio-fuel'. Even schools have been established and new proposals come every day.

Ralf told us that MicroLend's aim is to assist the poor and impoverished in setting up various business enterprises, so that they can enjoy basic human rights, a reasonable living standard and become self-sustaining.

A major objective is to ensure that the money donated is not swallowed up in business overheads as has been happening in the case of several major 'not for profit' organisations, with as little as 10% of funds raised being distributed to their intended beneficiaries. The other 90% is lost to management fees, directors stipends, marketing and who knows where else!

According to their webpage, MicroLend has an Annual total income of **\$267,345** and an Annual total expenditure of **\$201,569** - a 75% of income invested in the start up of individual small businesses in impoverished communities.

MicroLend manages the whole system from their office in Leumeah through the use of XERO accounting software and 'cloud' technology. Businesses report weekly and can be monitored and assisted remotely. This ensures that funds are not absorbed in unnecessary expenditure on travel, directors fees or duplicating infrastructure.

Ralf was presented with a book and thanked for his talk by Barry Antees.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

15th May. Board Meeting

19th May. MUNA, Parliament House, Sydney, 9am.

21st May. Club Meeting. Club Assembly

28th May. Club meeting, President Malcolm to talk on his trip to the Philippines.

1st June. Rotary NSW & ACT Emergency Services Awards at the Bankstown Sports Club.

2nd July. Changeover meeting where new board takes over.

30th July. Police Officer of the Year Awards.

12th -18th November. Waterline Challenge