



Community Networker

Rotary Club of Parramatta City, District 9675 | www.parramattacityrotary.org.au
Meeting 01 December 2014

The Toast

DG Barry Antees proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Wellington, New Zealand, who has among its members Jerry Mateparae, a former club president and now the Governor-General of New Zealand. Barry, who is soon to visit Wellington to give advice on the art of being a DG, said the Wellington Rotary Club had had other members who had reached vice-regal office.

Our Guest

Steve Burfield introduced Scott Gregg, a four-wheel drive enthusiast, international traveller and enterprising architect and planner, who has been employed, in recent times, by Parramatta City Council and the University of Western Sydney.

Christmas Trees

The site has been cleaned up and the signs erected on Castle Hill Road. Joy Gillett has done an amazing job of filling the roster but there is little room for absenteeism. It is a big job, our main fundraiser for the year, and we need all hands on deck. We will be selling raffle tickets at the Christmas tree sales. Ben Jackson has handed out a new batch of tickets to members. The first prize is a Toyota Yaris or \$16,000 in cash.

Club Updates

The 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?

A timely reminder for all members

If you are not attending a regular meeting you must send an apology to Secretary Joy no later than 9.30am on the day of the meeting.

If you fail to send an apology will be charged for the cost of the meal as the Club has to pay.

Also, if you are bringing a guest, please let Secretary Joy know (also before 9:30am on the day) so that a meal can be ordered.

Director for Vocational and Membership: Don Thomson;

Director for Media and Public Relations: John Stamboulie;

Director for International Affairs: Bob Rosengreen;

Director for Youth: Sze Chuah

Congratulations to the members who have agreed to take on these positions. The club is still looking for someone to take on the role of President-Elect for 2016-17.

The Board of Directors 2015-16

The club held its Annual General Meeting at which the following board was decided for 2015-16:

President: Malcolm Brown;

Secretary: Joy Gillett;

Treasurer: Keith Henning;

Director for Community Services: Natalie Cowell;

Dynamo Scott

Scott Gregg, dispensing with the any pictorial display of architectural achievements, quickly got down to the business of telling us what Parramatta meant to him. His connections went back to colonial times when two of his wife's forebears were transported to Parramatta from Ireland. On his mother's side, one of the forebears was Thomas Green, who came to Australia in the 1830's, settled in Parramatta and traded successfully, in particular, by importing timber from New Zealand suitable for ships' masts.

Scott said that in the 1830s, Parramatta was thriving and overtaking the original settlement at Sydney Cove.

The Lennox Bridge, built between 1835 and 1839, was a technological marvel of the time. Now, he said, Parramatta's time had "come again".

Scott went to primary school in Penrith and moved frequently. He lived for a time in Northmead. He loved Lake Parramatta and shopping at Parramatta's David Jones on

the waterfront. The family moved to Epping and Scott ended up in Cheltenham, where he lives now.

In 1980, at the age of 20, he went to a Rotaract meeting at Castle Hill where he was particularly attracted to the president, Cathy Hennessy, who was to become his wife.

Scott spent the next 20 years of his life on his architectural career, focussed on the City and later joined a property development group. One of his most challenging projects was redevelopment of the Darwin City Waterfront, which had some extraordinary hazards, including asbestos pollution from the time Cyclone Tracy went through and knocked down houses, and beyond that perhaps 2,000 unexploded bombs from the Japanese bombing campaign of World War II - that was more destructive than the bombing of Pearl Harbour.

In Parramatta, he took on the Civic Place project that had been a stop-start affair for years, with the contractor Grocon not willing to move forward with it in the wake of

the 2008 GFC. It took a change in the law by the NSW Government to allow the final property acquisitions of properties and to get the project moving. "We got the acquisitions done but Grocon still did not want to move," he said.

He sat down with the Parramatta City councillors and explained to them that the only option was to terminate Grocon's contract. That did not go down well, he said, but was determined that Council needed to adopt a new strategy. He told the council that he should put together a team of in house experts to give property advice. Other councils have since taken up this idea.

Scott said the team worked on the problems of stagnated development in Parramatta. "The property industry confidence was at a low and council facilities were pretty tired," he said. The team started rationalising council owned properties such as car parking within the CBD. There were, also, three council depots that were sold to fund a new and more efficient

operations centre at Rydalmere. It is due to open shortly.

The team came up with the idea of a Discovery Centre that reflected the aspirations of the community and the image of a new and emerging city. Pedestrian access along the Parramatta River was improved by inserting portals for pedestrians in the foundations of Lennox Bridge – a development only achieved after careful negotiations with heritage authorities. It will allow continuous public foreshore access revitalising the river links to Parramatta Park and the CBD when the northern portal opens prior to Christmas.

Other major projects included rebranding Civic Place to Parramatta Square and conducting design competitions to achieve new aspirational projects including a proposed 90-storey tall mixed use tower that will include a restaurant and function centre with viewing platform that will enable a spectacular view of the Cumberland Plain and the new public square at Parramatta Station.

Scott was then engaged by the University of Western Sydney to manage the gestation of the UWS 'Vertical Campus' attached to the Parramatta Square project and to run their property portfolio – continuing in the

same inspired way to talk about development. He supported the enthusiasm of the new vice-chancellor, Professor Barney Glover, and plans were made for the expansion of the campus in the Parramatta CBD.

On 9 April this year, the university reported: "The UWS Board of Trustees today gave in principle agreement for the University to develop a new flagship multi-storey campus in the heart of the Parramatta central business district. The plans for the new campus, expected to be ready for teaching in 2017, include blending innovative technology with collaborative learning spaces for face-to-face teaching, and creating a lively, cosmopolitan campus atmosphere.

UWS Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover says a multi-storey presence in Parramatta signals an exciting new era for UWS. Scott said a contract for construction has been signed and the project was now under way.

Things, in a sense, had come a full circle for Scott: he had left Parramatta to go the university and he was now bringing the university to Parramatta. At the time he spoke to us, Scott had left his position at the university and was looking for "the next big adventure, possibly in Parramatta". He added: "Parramatta's future is growing and assured. I am

Dates for Diaries

7 December. Rotary Clubs Group K Christmas Party at Cabarita.

8 December. No luncheon meeting

10 December. Australian Rotary Health Christmas Party, Epping Club

15 December. Final lunch meeting for 2014.

12 January. First meeting for 2015

2 February. Current State MP for Parramatta will be inducted as an Honorary Member

16 February. Moya Maffey of Northcott Employment to speak about employment opportunities for young people with disabilities who offer more than meet the eye.

23 February. Houses and mountainsides are to be lit up to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the foundation of Rotary. *(Of course it is still bushfire season in Australia and this may have a different impact to that envisaged in the northern hemisphere - RE)*