

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 21 October 2013

Our guests

This was a combined meeting of the three Parramatta Rotary Clubs on Monday evening at the Parramatta RSL Club. The guest of all three clubs was the District Governor, Garry Browne. President Keith, introducing him, said Garry was chief executive officer and managing director of Stuart Alexander and Co, importer, marketer and distributor of famous brands of food, beverages, confectionary, chocolates and snacks. Garry was president of the Food and Beverage Importers Association, a member of Family Business Australia, a peak body committed to contributing to Australia's future through a dynamic and sustainable family business. He was also world president of an organisation that had 8,000 business leaders. Garry was a member of the Rotary Club of Sydney, as Paul Harris Fellow and had an interest in distance running, which, Keith said, was “the only way to get away from Rotary”.

Garry Browne

Garry said that in his 12 months in the job as District Governor, he had gained some valuable insights into Rotary and he hoped to pass that on to the meeting. Rotary had been in existence for 92 years in this country and had used its networks to engage the community and deliver better outcomes to those in need. But it was now a changed world, revolutionised by the march of technology, and it was up to Rotary now to work out now how they could continue to communicate their message.

“In my lead-up to taking this role I thought long and hard about how I could make a difference,” he said. “How we engage our consumers is very different from the way we used to engage our consumers. Activities change not only from year to year but from minute to minute because technology rules everything we do in our lives, in our work and in our play.” For Rotarians to remain relevant in “this crowded space”, it had to change so that it could get the share of attention it deserved. “We do so much good in the world but so often we play follow-the-leader,” he said.

His aim for the coming year, when Rotary would have its District Conference and its International Convention, was to connect better with the community so that Rotary could achieve more and attract new members. If Rotary was exciting and Rotarians were enthusiastic about everything they did, Rotary would have a far better chance of

encouraging young people to join and support Rotary projects. “To give back is a fundamental human trait that we all share and it well and truly alive among our older generation,” he said. “You just have to deliver the opportunities and tell young people what Rotary is and how it should appeal to them in the way it suits their time and where they live. We have to give them something that is going to appeal to them.”

Rotary was one of the first great networks in the world, with 336,000 clubs in more than 200 countries. But today, because of work pressures and mobility, it made it difficult to attend a traditional club. But it had so much to offer. “Apart from multinational companies, how many organisations do you know that have access to that much knowledge and experience?” he asked. There had been “incredible vision and ambition” in Rotarians who had gone before and it was up to present-day Rotarians to “keep that dream alive”.

The District Conference, Shift 2014, would represent an outreach to the general community. “We can show what we do best in Rotary,” he said. “We want to show the public what we are capable of and that we are not an old, stale organisation,” he said. “We want to show how you can have greater access in today’s technological world. We want to show the next business leaders who have been successful and have a social conscience. We want to achieve sponsorship dollars and we want to encourage new people to have an interest in Rotary. We want to provide a fantastic opportunity for Rotarians to bring their family members, their partners, their children as well as employees to get them to engage in Rotary. If we can achieve a one percent increase in membership for the year, we have reversed the trend in the district.

“In the Rotary International Convention, we have a grand opportunity to promote the brand on the part of Rotary and I am sure there will be no-one here who wants that opportunity to be lost. I ask you to make the point of sharing the experience, not just of being a Rotarian, but having the values of a Rotarian, with everyone around you.” Garry said that taking into account the vast inequalities of wealth in the world, and the ocean of need, Rotary and what it represented was in a position to make a difference.

Club Amalgamation

In discussion and questions that followed Garry’s speech, Rotarian Ron Fox, a member since 1967, raised the prospect of the three Parramatta Rotary Clubs amalgamating. Garry said that the life and death of Rotary clubs lay with its membership. “I believe it is up to the members to make a difference, which means getting gut into the community and doing something about it,” he said. “I believe clubs should compete with one another. But having collective meetings is fantastic.”

The Bushfires

A raffle conducted at the joint meeting of Parramatta Rotary Clubs raised \$160 for the bushfire victims. DG Garry Browne said in a media release by Rotary District 9675 this week that it was important for funds to be directed to national organisations who have experience in devastation and crisis relief - they also are organisations that are trusted and acknowledged by the community as credible. The Salvation Army fits this criteria and is well aligned with Rotary. He said financial donations allowed the people affected to recover with dignity as being able to purchase items they needed most. It gave them a choice to spend in their local communities and it helped the local communities rebuild. “The role of The Salvation Army is to help people get their lives back together and reclaim what they've lost in the course of this disaster. The

donations will be used to help them in the process with replacing essential things that are not covered by insurance.”

Donations should be directed to The Salvation Army - Rotary Bushfire Appeal www.salvos.org.au/rotary or via the phone 13 Salvos (13 72 58) quoting appeal code 1043314.

Sausage Tossing

President Keith said the Friday barbecue at Bunnings was on for 8 November but because of lack of numbers putting their hands up, our club would not be manning a barbecue at Bunnings on Sunday, November 10.

Dates for diaries.

October 28th – Club Meeting, speaker Dot Hennessey, Dist 9675 Vocation Service Chairperson.

October 31st – ‘My Career – Your Career Expo, Northcott Building, Fennell St, North Parramatta.

District Training, Liverpool Catholic Club.

November 1st – Combined Presidents meeting. Liverpool Catholic Club.

November 4th – Club Meeting, speaker PP Miriam Jacka, Donations in Kind (DIK)

November 8th – Bunnings BBQ

November 11th – Club Meeting, speaker Linda Sirol, Succession Planning

Apologies and Guests

Apologies to Joy Gillett on 8837 1900 before 9.30 am on Monday morning.

This is the latest time apologies can be accepted as numbers must to be given to the hotel by this time.

If you are bringing a a guest please also advice this to Joy by that time to ensure a meal is prepared.

The Club is required to pay for the number of lunches ordered. Invoices for the cost of a meal will be sent to members by Vandana if you do not apologise for non-attendance by the time stated.

The Idyllic Scene

On Tuesday last week, I took one of my long walks through the lower Blue Mountains, starting at Rickard Road in Warrimoo and walking along the Long Angle Fire Trail that eventually took me to Winmalee. The walk was beautiful the Mountain Ashes reaching to huge heights from the valley floors, the bellbirds chiming away throughout the glades, the crash of a startled wallaby bounding away through the scrub, and despite the heat and dryness, still water in the creeks. As I approached I could catch glimpses of houses at the edge of the bushland, beautiful houses intruding into the glades, surrounded by the same foliage, with wildlife nibbling round the

edges. I thought then that beautiful as this scene might be, where residents could sit on their verandas sipping cider and listening to the sounds of the bush, it was madness. What they had done, as people all over Australia have done, is to have built their houses in the midst of a whole stack of fuel. There had already been a warning how dangerous everything was, with the destruction of 47 cars outside the swimming centre at Olympic park on Monday, and I had a deep feeling of foreboding. And two days later, on Thursday, it all came true. More than 200 houses have been lost, at Springwood and Winmalee and elsewhere, and people have been filmed crying over each other's shoulders at the devastation they have come back to.

But wasn't it all so predictable. There have been bushfires for decade after decade, particularly in the mountains. The years 1939 and 1968 stand out. And people have rebuilt. But the wooden verandas have gone back up and the trees have continued to hug the houses and then they have all gone up again.

I have covered disasters for years and years, even wrote a book on them, and for the life of me cannot see how people should be so upset when it is obvious for years what will eventually happen. The Bold Street bridge that came down on the train in 1977, with 83 killed, had stood there for 60 years. Any engineer looking at the bridge could have foreseen what would happen if a train, weighing hundreds of tonnes, became derailed and hit a stanchion. In fact, there had been an incident when a goods train had become derailed and some carriages had hit a stanchion, not with dramatic results but showing what might happen. I cannot understand why in Japan, the Fukushima nuclear power station should have been built where it was wide open to a tsunami, without some sort of barrier, perhaps in the shape of a ship's keel, to divert the waters.

When it comes to bushfires, we have seen the Ash Wednesday disaster in 1983, when 96 people died in Victoria and South Australia. We have seen Black Saturday in Victoria in 2009, when 173 people died, and we have only got half the message. Certainly, the communications system, using all available technology, public education and dedicated Rural Fire Service responses have kept loss of life to a minimum – at this stage one dead, from a heart attack. But the real problem remains unresolved. Why build your house next to a fuel dump? Maybe it is unavoidable in the country, and the trees do give shade and help with lifestyle. But what a trade-off!

Malcolm Brown