

Rotary Connects.....the World

Rotary Club of Parramatta City

June 18th 2020
Volume 47, Issue 32

Welcome and as Bill Lawry says “ it’s all happening”

This coming Monday we are back to the Novatel for our physical fortnightly meetings, but for past and current members who are unable to attend we will have the zoom meeting starting at 1.00pm. This will also allow our guest speakers to also save on travel and speak to our members from anywhere around the world. The Monday we will have Bob Aitken coming from the Blue Mountains.

I have also received the news that our newly acquired Graffiti Removal Trailer is now finished and newly sign written. We will organise a launch of this new project along with the Rotary Club of Granville who are our partners and we will jointly be able to assist businesses and residents of our area to remove graffiti which costs alone in NSW over \$300M annually.

The Club’s Changeover will be on Monday 13th July, where the annual report will be tabled and next years plans will be outlined.

I hope to see you at the Monday week’s meeting and if you missed any of our previous speakers they are on the Clubs Youtube channel, search under the club’s name or https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIv8_YX8Tu9KosEkob6MyVA

As well I encourage to use our facebook page, like it and subscribe to our Youtube channel as well

President Barry Antees



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Notes meeting.....2-3
- Guest Speaker.....4

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Notes from meeting

MEETING NOTES-MALCOLM BROWN

15^h June 2020

The club held a meeting by zoom. Present were president Barry Antees, secretary Joy Gillett, PP Malcolm Brown, Warunee Nuij, Joy Nel and our guest, Richard Ford. Barry said Richard had worked in public education for over 20 years in the Mt Druitt area of Sydney's outer west, an area classified as "low socioeconomic". Richard had been principal of Tregear Public school and for the last five years had been principal of Doonside Public School. During his career he had integrated many social programs within the education system.

Richard Ford

Richard said he had started teaching at Blackett Pubic School, followed by an appointment at Crawford Public School at Doonside. In 2008, he went to Tregear Public School as an assistant principal. Ten years ago, he was promoted to principal. In 2013, he met Warunee and Kimberley from the Smith Family, which had a program called "learning for Life" and was offering 12 scholarships to the school. It was a "fantastic" initiative, Richard said, but other parents were grumbling because their own children had missed out. Richard told the Smith Family the school would take as many scholarships as it could get. In the end, the school got up to 43 scholarships. "It was about rewarding kids for their fantastic attendance," he said. It was not a case of Family and Community Services chasing up truant children. Instead, it was rewarding children for coming to school.



In 2015, when a principal's position became available at Crawford Public School, he went back. But he was "devastated" that he was leaving the partnership with the Smith Family and there was nothing in the Doonside area. "I said, 'Have we got anything at Doonside?'. There was some violence in the playground. A handful of the pupils were definitely shaped by their outside environment and a product of their own dysfunctional environments and did not know better behaviour. One of the problems was that nobody was listening to them. That year, there were a total of 278 days

MEETING NOTES-MALCOLM BROWN

suspension, collectively, of misbehaving students. "I decided we can change that and make them feel special," Richard said. Richard told the Smith Family that if they were ever able to start up in the Doonside area, he would be happy to get it going at. The following year, the Smith Family was able to get someone into their area. "I was happy to see Warunee again, he said. "We were able to get some scholarships. I knew what the pitfalls would be. I knew we would have to get our more active families and show them what a positive spin this was.

"We started with the families with high absentee rates. Parents came in for an interview. I said if we can keep it [attendance] up, this is what we have to offer. The parents loved it. They knew it was like a contract. They had to keep their kids at school. We started a trend where we had close to 100 families in four years in the scholarships. Some of the children had not been able to participate in sports because their families could not afford to buy sports clothes. Some children had not even had school shoes and the Smith Family donated 100 pairs of shoes to the school. The scholarship enabled them to buy school resources and pay for excursions, freeing up money for extracurricular activities. The Smith Family said it would give the families mobile phones so that the pupils could engage in peer reading with older students. When the scholarships started to deliver, some of the parents had "tears in their eyes" they were so appreciative. "These parents are doing it hard." But the scholarships could follow the children through their school years. The school had a raffle system where children got tickets for good attendance and the prizes were pushbikes. "The children love it," Richard said. "It just gives them that buzz."

There were other programs operating at the school. Relationships Australia also participated. The school with some 24 percent of its student population Aboriginal had participation by a pilot the Aboriginal Mentoring Service. The school had instituted a reading program and that was also appreciated by parents, although some were ashamed by the fact that the children could read better than they could. Richard set his sights higher than that. The Smith Family and Western Sydney University organised what it called an "Aspiration Day" where, working with the school and the Smith Family, it set out what children might achieve and showed them possibilities they may not have known due to family limitations. "One of the kids said, 'I am going to be the first person in my family to go to university,'" Richard said. A child in Year Six said he was going to be an engineer. "I would love to follow him up," Richard said. "He is close to finishing high school He was so proud. He wanted to go to university. That is good. Even having the aspiration is good. That is some of the great things that came out of the partnership with the Smith Family."

Richard said the school had come a long way. Joy Nel questioned what a sponsor she knew could offer in the terms of sports uniforms. Richard said that the school spent most of its funding on human resources so that students had more support in the classroom. Some students It had been such a poor school that some children were "running round in school footy jerseys their parents are running round in." "It is always great to know there are people out there ready to help," he said. But whatever equipment the children were given, the school was at pains to ensure the children respected it. Behaviour had dramatically improved at the school. Last year, there was a total of only 40 suspension days. "When you have some 500 kids in school, you know things are going to happen," he said "I am not saying it is not difficult. There are some kids walking around doing what they like they have no boundaries but the rest of the community is really trying hard. The fact that teachers are listening to the kids is a big thing for me."

Asked why he had chosen to spend his teaching career in an area that was so underprivileged, Richard said he had had a difficult upbringing himself, in a single parent family, and he identified with battlers. "I think a lot of teachers have decided to stay where they can really make a massive change for our kids," he said. Teachers assigned to the Mt Drunit area were once assigned on the basis of their ability to manage behaviour. "We have turned it around to be teachers," he said. My teachers are teachings and not just behaviour managing most of the time. Students are no longer swearing at teachers on that basis.

Barry Antees, thanking Richard for his talk said there should be more people like him and the club was talking with the Smith Family about how it might be able to help.

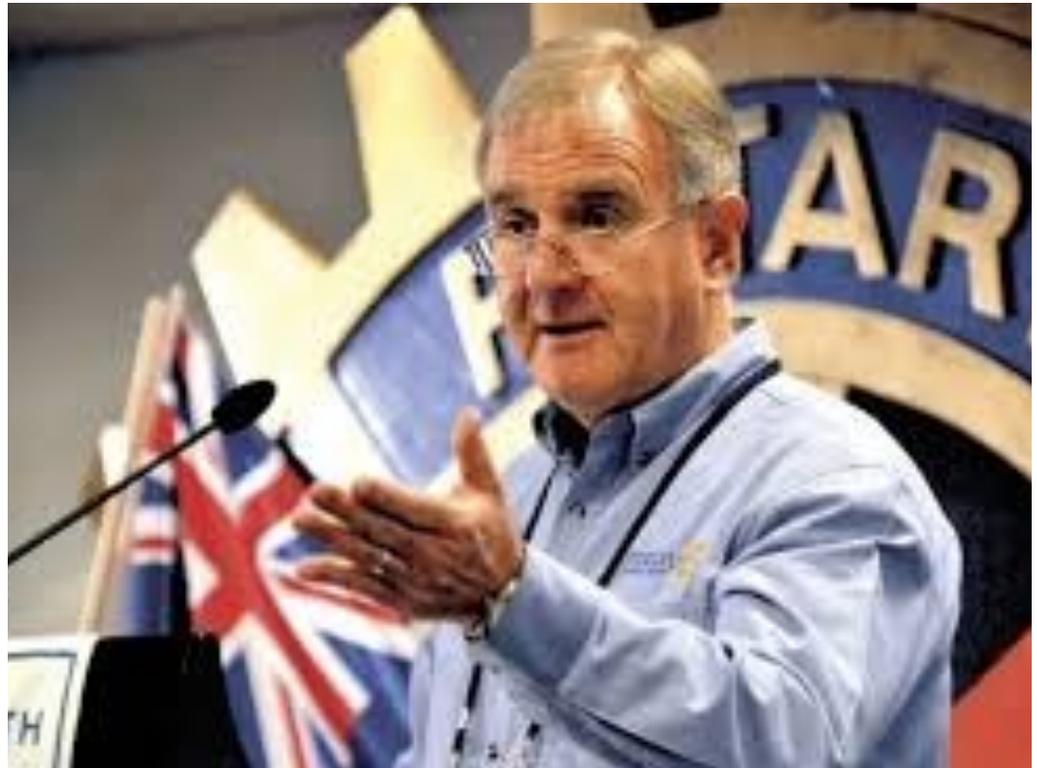
MEETING NOTES-MALCOLM BROWN



Guest Speaker
Virtual club meetings
Monday June 21st 2020 at 1.00pm

Bob Aitken-Journalist and former Editor Rotary Down Under Speaking on the new book 100 years of Rotary in Australia and New Zealand

Bob enjoyed twenty seven successful years as managing editor of Rotary Down Under's stable of regional magazines, prior to accepting the challenge of strategic partner alignment whilst working to enhance Rotary's public image. Rotary Down Under's core business remains the production of quality print magazines ever mindful of the changing focus within all facets of modern media, digital publishing and television



scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Bob Aitken

Time: Jun 21, 2020 01:00 PM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4234593314?pwd=K1ZNYXQ3WkpXYsSvTlloZVRQMDZQdz09>

Meeting ID: 423 459 3314

Password: 1LdARH

ROTARY

WE CONNECT PEOPLE

Rotary unites more than a million people

Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

WE TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES

We take action locally and globally

Each day, our members pour their passion, integrity, and intelligence into completing projects that have a lasting impact. We persevere until we deliver real, lasting solutions.

Giving to Our Causes



Promoting Peace



Fighting Disease



Providing Clean Water



Saving Mothers and Children



Supporting Education



Growing Local Economies



Rotary
Club of Parramatta City

