



Our Foundation continues to grow and succeed.

Guest editorialist: Past RI President Ian Riseley

In his editorial for the Winter edition of this publication, PDG Murray Verso referred to those famous first lines in the Charles Dickens classic novel A Tale of Two Cities. "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times". As we approach the end of 2020, it is fair to say that this year has been a real challenge for just about everyone in this country, starting with terrible fires, floods, drought and of course the COVID-19 virus. 2020 has been a shocker and cannot end soon enough!

But even in these difficult times, we can and should find positives. Do you ever pause to think about how fortunate we are to live in Australia? We have a standard of living that is almost unequalled in the world, and as a result for most of the time we are a fairly happy bunch. One result of this good fortune is that Australians are generally quite generous in spirit and in sharing our resources.

That is just as well, because there is still a significant demand for charity in Australia and especially overseas. There are many worthwhile causes that deserve our support. Let me suggest to you that our Rotary Foundation is an appropriate destination for charitable contributions, both from Rotarians and the wider community.

I'm sure all Rotarians in District 9800 can bring to mind some of the great programs achieved through the Rotary Foundation (TRF). Start with polio eradication, our flagship humanitarian program that has achieved amazing success in the past 40+ years, as evidenced by the wonderful news this year that all of Africa has now been certified as polio-free. This is just the latest achievement in our quest to rid the world of this disease.

District 9800 has a proud record of achievement in Foundation programs, and no other district in the world can match your success with nominating Peace Fellows. Further, you make sure that your District Grant achieves a lot with careful planning and judicious spending. Impressive!



Because of the low level of expenses incurred by our Foundation, contributions to TRF provide an excellent return on investment. And personal contributions are tax deductible (did I mention that I am an accountant?)

The TRF work in all the areas of focus is impressive, and next year we are adding The Environment as a 7th Area of Focus. This is an exciting time for all involved!

Our Foundation is extremely well regarded internationally. You know

that it has received the highest rating of 4 stars for 12 straight years from Charity Navigator, but did you know that we were ranked number 1 in their list of the 100 best charities that everyone's heard of?

Our Rotary Foundation deserves your support, and District 9800 leads the country in giving. On behalf of all those needy people around the world who benefit from TRF programs I say a sincere THANK YOU and keep it up.

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# Vale PDG Gordon McKern OAM

24 August 1935 - 29 November 2020



The Rotary world and beyond was saddened by the passing of Past District Governor Gordon McKern in Bendigo aged 85. Gordon, who was once described in Federal Parliament as a living treasure, was an outstanding Rotarian, a family man, a businessman, a community leader and friend. He was an example to us all of integrity, selflessness, commitment, and honour.

Gordon joined the Rotary Club of Eaglehawk in 1976 after relocating his business and his family from Melbourne. In his 44 years in Rotary, he contributed at all levels of the organisation from active club member, to club president, and District Governor (1992-93).

As District Governor, Gordon led efforts to raise \$4 million to fund the building of the Rotary Bone Marrow Research Centre in Parkville. He later assisted in efforts to create the BMDI Rotary House in North Melbourne, which provides accommodation for families of patients undergoing cancer treatments. BMDI, now known as the Fight Cancer Foundation, remained an ongoing interest for Gordon.

Gordon went on to represent District 9800 at the 1995, 1998 and 2001 Councils on Legislation. As an RI Training Leader, he helped to train incoming district governors from 2002 to 2004. He chaired the District's Paul Harris Society from 2013 until 2019 and through his passion and personal charm managed to grow it from 30 to 135 members. Gordon was a Major Donor to the Foundation.

In 2015, the Rotary Foundation's recognized Gordon with a Citation for Meritorious Service, and last year, Rotary International gave him its highest honour, the Service Above Self Award.

Gordon also played a key role in his local community. As a state appointed Commissioner, he helped to shape the City of Greater Bendigo during the local government amalgamations in the 1990s. He was the chairman of Coliban Water for 14 years, chairman of the Bendigo Art Gallery for six years, president of Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE for five years and chairman of La Trobe University Bendigo Regional Advisory

Board for four years. He was also chairman at both the Ulumbarra Theatre and the Aspire Foundation.

Gordon was recognised as Citizen of the Year in Eaglehawk in 1986 and in Bendigo in 2014.

He received the Australian Centenary Medal in 2001 and the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2009 for his service to the community.

Gordon's wife Anita predeceased him. He is survived by his children Debbie, Kathi, Michael, Philip, Christine, Matthew and partners, 18 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren. Together with his family, we all mourn his passing.

## Tributes to Gordon McKern:

**PRIP Ian Riseley:** Sad to lose such a giant of Rotary.

**PDG Dennis Shore:** Gordon was deservedly a legend in his lifetime. He will be greatly missed but his legacy will live on. We are all richer for having the privilege of knowing him and working with him

**PDG Grant Hocking:** A lovely person and great role model.

**PDG Iven Mackay:** Such a lovely man in every way and a Rotary friend for over 30 years. So well respected and a true gentleman. A great loss to so many and very much a Rotarian of the old school, solid values and a deep caring for others. Looked up to by so many.

**PDG John Wigley:** Gordon was a wonderful man and a good friend. Fran and I mourn his passing. The Bendigo community and Rotary have lost one of the best.

**PDG Bronwyn Stephens:** The inspiration, mentoring and dedication Gordon invested in my journey is a legacy treasured. He was a humble, generous, and beautiful man who lived a good and faithful life.

**Mark Anderson, RISPP:** Gordon was a great inspiration. I just loved working with him. His passion for Rotary was infectious. He will be greatly missed by not only the Rotary community but the Bendigo community. RIP Gordon. I will miss you.

**Rotarian Cheryl Pisterman:** I loved working with him for 6 years as he contributed so much to the Paul Harris Society. And will miss our long phone chats about everything and nothing: he was a great friend to me and so many.

**Rotarian Catherine (Kitty) O'Connor:** The world lost a wonderful human. Vale Gordon McKern OAM, the Rotary world mourns your loss and sends its condolences to your family



# Outstanding success of our “Walk with Us” to End Polio Campaign

Congratulations to End Polio Chair, Kitty O'Connor and IPDG Grant Hocking for their work on the Rotary Walk with Us for polio campaign. This D9800 initiative ran throughout October. 355 individuals and 47 teams walked and with the help of their sponsors raised more than \$122,523, an outstanding figure. More than half of this amount (approx.\$77,00) came from District 9800 but walkers and teams from all around Australia and even several from overseas, were involved.

DG Philip Archer and DGE Dale Hoy were the two highest fundraisers. We were also grateful for the support of RI Director Elect Jessie Harman. Jessie posted commentaries of her daily walks on Facebook and was also one of most successful fundraisers.

IPDG Grant Hocking described the benefits of the month-long campaign as:

- ▶ The excellent fundraising result will go a long way to support the End Polio Now campaign.
- ▶ It encouraged people to get out and walk and improve their health and fitness.
- ▶ It improved the mental health of participants by getting them out and about during Melbourne's lockdown period.
- ▶ The most significant benefit was increasing the public awareness of Rotary in general, and of Polio and the important role Rotary has played in efforts to eradicate it.

Because of its success, the campaign will run again next year.



Above: Glenferrie Rotarians, Cheryl Pisterman, Peter Moore and Thelma Hutchison setting off in Yarra Bend Park

The Facebook Page ([Rotary Walk With Us](#)) and the superb website ([www.rotarywalkwithus.org](http://www.rotarywalkwithus.org)) will be available for future campaigns.

Next year we will start stronger as a bonus of the database built into the online platform enables us to contact all participants and donors and invite them to participate again in 2021. We can only hope that there will not be the restrictions of a COVID-19 lockdown inhibiting groups of walkers.

We were pleasantly surprised that Rotarians from several other countries joined the walk. Next year we will review the capacity to replicate the platform for other countries and actively encourage overseas involvement. We will also encourage more districts in Australia and New Zealand to participate.

Thank you, Kitty and Grant.



Create a team, grab some friends and join us this October as we walk for those who can't





# Strong Demand for Foundation Year 11-12 Scholarship Grants



Understandably, applications for District Grants were off to a slow start this year, due the obstacles encountered by clubs because of the coronavirus restrictions. So far, the D9800 Grants Committee has been able to approve only eight Local and International District Grants, with a combined project value of A\$56,500 and a total grant value of \$19,000.



One area that has done well this year, however, is the Year 11-12 Scholarship Grants. When applications closed, the number received significantly exceeded the original quota of ten grants. At its November meeting, the D9800 Humanitarian Grants Committee decided to accept all the applications that had been received this year in recognition of the strength of this program. In total, seventeen grants were approved, with a total grant value of \$17,000 and a total scholarship value of \$34,000. Twenty-five deserving Year 9 students will be supported with scholarships through their Year 11 and Year 12 studies as a result.



Sincere congratulations to those clubs that have secured scholarship grants this year for their local high schools. The successful clubs are:



## Getting the Benefits of your Scholarship Grant

There are two equally important objectives for Rotary clubs in offering these scholarship grants. They are:

1. To encourage talented and motivated young people facing financial barriers to successfully complete their Year 11 and Year 12 secondary education, and
2. To build stronger relationships between clubs and their local schools

Those clubs that are most successful with the grants program seize the opportunity to leverage the scholarship grant to strengthen and grow their relationship with their local high school. Ways in which this can be done include:

- ▶ Personally visiting the school to present a letter advising of the success of the grant, and reviewing with the responsible school officer the grant administration and acquittal process. This begins the process of building personal relationships
- ▶ Inviting the students with their families and the school principal, welfare officer or scholarship administrator to the club as part of a special Youth Evening that highlights the scholarships and other Rotary Youth Programs.
- ▶ Presenting the students with framed certificates at a club meeting to which their families have been invited.
- ▶ Engaging the school principal or other contacts made during the process, including the scholarship recipients, in Rotary events such as the International Women's Day Women in Rotary Breakfast.
- ▶ Engaging the school in other Rotary youth programs, including MUNA, RYPEN, the Conoco Phillips Science Experience, RYLA and Rotary Youth Exchange.
- ▶ Actively seeking new Rotarians for your club from parents, relatives and friends of the students and amongst school staff.
- ▶ Engaging the school with other Rotary projects such as Tree Planting, the installation of a Peace Pole, Rotaract and other programs and events from time to time.

Your additional projects with schools might even qualify for a District Local Grant for your club.

Club	School	Student #
Fitzroy	Fitzroy High School	1
Brighton North	Brigton Secondary College	2
Keilor	Simonds Catholic College	2
Essendon	Essendon Keilor College	1
Footscray	Braybrook Secondary College	2
North Balwyn	Balwyn High School	1
Canterbury	Kew High School	1
Hawthorn	Auburn High School	1
Altona	Emmanuel College	2
Brighton	Brighton Secondary College	1
Kew	Swinburne Secondary College	1
Chadstone East Malvern	Ashwood College	2
Macedon Ranges	Gisborne Secondary College	1
Glen Eira	Glen Eira College	1
Flemington Kensington	Kensington Community High	2
Melton	Melton Secondary College	2
* previous recipient		
	No. of Students	25



## Strong Demand for Foundation Year 11-12 Scholarship Grants Contd

Lesley McCarthy (far left) and Sam Nicol (far right) presenting Reagan Miller and Keyra Day with Scholarship Certificates at a meeting of the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington. While not a formal requirement of the Foundation, inviting students to meetings and the presentation of certificates enhances their scholarship.



So, the scholarship is not the end, but the beginning of a new world of opportunity for clubs in engaging with their local communities. The most successful clubs have seized this opportunity with both hands. And in the process, they help deserving students take important steps towards securing their future.

Congratulations and well done to all those clubs that have been successful grant recipients this year. The Grants Committee looks forward to working with you over the next two years to help make your project a great success.

Richard Blakeman  
District 9800 Chair  
Humanitarian Grants Committee



## Centurion Week

*from Rob Byrne, Senior Coordinator – Foundation Services, Rotary South Pacific & Philippines Office*



Rotary districts in Australia and New Zealand initiated the Centurion Program many years ago, as an easy way for all Rotarians to support their charity, The Rotary Foundation.

Program members are asked to make a yearly contribution of AUS\$100 or more to the Foundation's Annual Fund. That's only about \$2 per week.

This year, the Australian and New Zealand districts launched Centurion Week in the second week of Foundation Month, from 9th to 15th November. This was intended to encourage Rotarians to become Centurions. With Rotary about to celebrate 100 years in Australia and New Zealand, it is a great time to become a Centenary Centurion!

The benefits of doing so means that the Foundation helps you as a Rotarian to deliver much greater impact, whether in your own community or around the world.

On p.13 of the November *Rotary Down Under*, you'll see an example of how a Rotarian with a great idea can

access Foundation funding to deliver a community project that would otherwise have been well out of reach. And on p.12, you'll see that for every \$100 contributed in Australia and New Zealand, Rotarians have received grants of \$183 to support their projects!

Think of the Foundation as your Impact Multiplier.

How do you become a Centurion?

- ▶ Many clubs simply add a \$100 option to their annual dues invoice and then forward this, on your behalf, to the Foundation.
- ▶ Others add \$2 to the weekly attendance fee.
- ▶ Mostly, members just go to My Rotary and set up a regular payment, whether monthly, quarterly or yearly, to the Annual Fund.

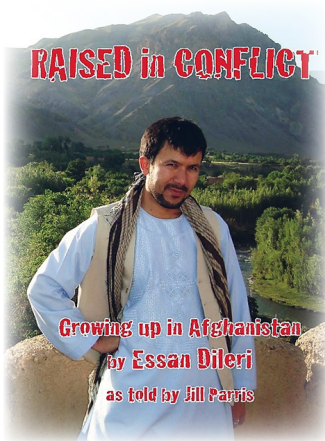
The Rotary Foundation is our charity. Let's all support it and multiply our impact in the world.



# Our 2020 Rotary Peace Scholars

Once again District 9800 has maintained its unbroken record of mentoring successful Peace Fellows since the start of the program in 2001, firstly under the guidance of Bob Fels and more recently with Robert Helme. We believe we are the most successful District in the world in this Internationally competitive process. The number of endorsed candidates from D9800 selected for Peace Fellowships now stands at 42.

This year 112 candidates were approved by the Rotary Foundation from 800 applicants worldwide. We had two successful candidates, Essan Dileri and Peter Pal, both of whom are former refugees and now Australian citizens.



Essan Dileri on the cover of his book.

**Essan Dileri** is a refugee from Afghanistan who sought asylum in Australia in 2009. He fell foul of drug lords in Afghanistan when his master of arts thesis, suggesting that Afghan farmers grow saffron rather than opium, received international attention and farmers began taking up his suggestion.

In a self-published book, *Raised in Conflict*, Essan has chronicled his childhood living in a nation controlled by a foreign power and the civil war that followed when Russia withdrew from Afghanistan.

Essan now works for the Melton City Council as a team leader in Diversity and Intercultural Development. He has been selected to enter the certificate course at Chulalongkorn, Thailand in June 2021.



Peter Pal receiving an Ambassador for Peace award by the Universal Peace Federation for his voluntary work as a community leader.

**Peter Pal** survived the civil war that erupted between North Sudan and South Sudan in 1983. He spent eleven years in a refugee camp in Ethiopia before coming to Australia in 2001.

Peter is now a community leader and peacebuilding practitioner working with various South Sudanese groups in Melbourne. Peter lives in Noble Park and is employed as a community development worker with the Victoria Electoral Commission. He will attend the February 2021 certificate course at the new Rotary Peace Centre at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda.

## Our man in Evanston

*Steve Sundstrom, Regional Grants Officer, Rotary International*



Above: Steve Sundstrom, meeting with current District Foundation Chair, PDG Murray Verso in Evanston

No two days are the same for Regional Grants Officer Steve Sundstrom who is based at Rotary headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, USA.

Steve has been with Rotary since 2014 and manages grants from District 9800 as well as other parts of Australia, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste, Japan, the Solomon Islands, Guam, Micronesia, Palau and the Northern Marianas. He handles all district grant applications, many global grant applications, including scholarships, ensuring the Foundation's requirements for measurability, sustainability, and stakeholder ownership.

Before joining the Rotary office, Steve worked in Asia, Africa and South America as an urban environment consultant. He lived in Japan for 12 years and received a Master's in Environmental Management from Kyoto University. He speaks fluent Japanese which is a great help communicating with Rotarians in Japan.

His role requires him to navigate the needs in each region, navigate the different standards across the world and to balance project outcomes. Steve is not only up for these challenges but thrives on helping amazing projects come to life.

In the Evanston office he works with 27 teammates, but he truly feels his team is much bigger. He has worked with many different Rotarians around the world and calls many of them "colleagues on the ground".

Due to Covid 19, Steve is currently working from home in Chicago. He fondly recalls approving nine global grants for the Australia and New Zealand centenary year just after the pandemic hit. Some of these Give Every Child A Future grants are being supported by District 9800 Designated Funds and will provide lifesaving vaccines for 100,000 children across nine Pacific countries.

"These nine grants are something we've never done before and it was two years in the making" Steve said, "It was so uplifting being part of the process when there was so much confusion in the world."

The District 9800 Foundation team certainly appreciates the cheerful and practical advice that Steve gives us when we are planning and processing grants and placing our global scholars.



# What is the TRF Cadre?

Madhumita Bishnu Past President of the E-Club of Melbourne answers the question.



Madu, as a technical adviser for the TRF Cadre, assessing a global grant project in a school in Auranagabad, India

I became a Rotary Foundation (TRF) cadre in 2009. My area of expertise is Education. I was asked to join by PDG Bharat Reddy of District 3160 in India as I was very keen to help children with education. Part of the money for a global grant is allocated for TRF Cadre visits if required, or to assess the feasibility of a GG project before it starts. I have done many grant studies and have been both an interim and post project site visitor.

## Who are we?

The Rotary Foundation's Cadre of Technical Advisers is a group of Rotarians who volunteer their time and professional expertise in Rotary's six areas of focus and evaluate the technical feasibility of projects, as well as reviewing project finances and grant management. The Cadre is composed of more than 700 members from 75 countries who speak more than 80 languages.

**How we can help?** Cadre members can assist your project by:

- ▶ Providing project planning advice and implementation guidance
- ▶ Designing community assessments
- ▶ Incorporating elements of sustainability into projects
- ▶ Establishing monitoring and evaluation plans

- ▶ Answering questions about Rotary's areas of focus
  - ▶ Providing financial management best practices
- Our mission is to strengthen the impact of Rotary's grants by assisting Rotarians in planning projects and safeguarding Foundation funds. By signing into My Rotary and running the Cadre Member Information report you can find a member of the Cadre who has expertise in your project's area of focus. When you identify a Cadre member who can help with your project, contact them through the email listed in the report.

## What we do?

- ▶ We serve as consultants to Rotary staff and Rotarians who are planning and implementing grant projects
- ▶ Assist The Rotary Foundation Trustees with the grant funding process by reviewing grant applications
- ▶ Evaluate the implementation of projects that have been funded by Foundation grants to ensure that the funds are being used properly
- ▶ Perform programmatic audits to ensure that Foundation grant funds are being used in accordance with the terms and conditions for Rotary grants and that stewardship guidelines are followed
- ▶ Carry out evaluations and interviews associated with Rotary's Grant Model Evaluation as well as other Rotary initiatives and partnerships

My last visit as an Interim Site Visitor was to the city of Aurangabad in Maharashtra state, India, in January of 2019. The Rotary Clubs of Mumbai and Auranagabad were jointly running a Digital Learning Centre in public schools with an International partner in Nepal. During my 3-day visit, I met Rotarians connected with the project, Government officials, students, and parents from the schools where the Digital Learning Centre was being set up. I interacted to find out how they felt about their students' growth as far as digital education is concerned and ensured that they aware of Rotary's involvement.

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a reference  
guide for  
members



## New Foundation booklets

The Foundation staff at the RI office in Parramatta have prepared a new 8-page booklet that gives a quick overview of the Foundation in our region. The booklets will be a useful addition to the RDU New Member kits. New Rotarians will be able to learn about The Foundation from the time of their induction and hopefully start making personal contributions early on in their Rotary careers.

You can download a copy at:

<https://bit.ly/TRF-Ref-Guide-Z8> or

contact Rob Byrne, Senior Coordinator – Foundation Services at the Rotary South Pacific & Philippines Office

Email: [Robert.Byrne@rotary.org](mailto:Robert.Byrne@rotary.org)



*Merry Christmas*