



Rotary International District 9640
Governor's Letter
Number 15, Australia Day 2003

District 9640
Governor 2002/2003
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Favourite Websites

Rotary International
www.rotary.org

District 9640
<http://rotary9640.org>

Rotary Down Under
<http://rotarnet.com.au>

Brisbane Convention
www.rotary2003.org

From the Governor's Desk

I am, you are, we are Australian.

I'm the hot wind from the desert
I'm the black soil of the plains

I'm the mountains and the valleys
I'm the drought and flooding rains

I am the rock. I am the sky
The rivers when they run
The spirit of this great land

I am Australian

We are one but we are many
And from all the lands on earth we come

We share a dream and sing with one voice:

I am, you are, we are Australian

"I am Australian"
Writers:
WoodleyNewton
Music:
Bruce Woodley

The single CD of this moving piece of contemporary Australian music is available at Telstra for \$6 - all Telstra profits going to Farmhand.

Ross Smith

Bushfire Disaster

As I write, bushfires are spreading across five states in searing heat.

They are destroying properties from Victoria to Western Australia and forcing evacuation of several towns.

"I thought we would all be killed. The flames licked our arms and faces and burnt our airways. This whole time, the cows that the farmer had rounded up were all screaming. I will never forget that sound and sight of livestock burning"

Canberra firefighter **Matt Dutkiewicz**, whose crew was trapped in the fires.

Canberra, Duffy especially, has lost more than five hundred houses, Victoria's alpine region is currently threatened and there is a huge blaze at Goodwood, south of Bundaberg.

"You think of your own house as grand, then you see it like this and it isn't much."

Gail Buchanan
Fire Victim

The courage, spirit and the fortitude of the fire victims and the fire fighters is summed up for me in a single stanza of Dorothea

Mackellar's *My Country*:

"I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains;
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror -
The wide brown land for me."

I would turn the last two lines into a refrain, by way of emphasis:

"Her beauty and her terror -
The wide brown land for me."

I have been in contact with my colleague District Governor Ian Sayers in Canberra for advice on how clubs and Rotarians in our District may respond to those families in need.

Cash donations should be sent to:

**JC Olsson
Relief Trust
C/- PDG Paul Street
PO Box 267
HAWKER ACT 2614**

All donations are tax deductible and receipts will be issued.

An assessment committee has been set up that will receive and assess applications for assistance. DG Ian Sayers is a member of that committee.

**National Youth
Science Forum
2003
- a special year-**

Our NYSF students arrived in Canberra, this week, under circumstances that can only be described as terrifying, particularly from the point of view of youngsters who may not have been away from home on their own before.

On arrival they were all told to immediately call their parents to tell them that they were safe.

From that time on they were almost under siege.

The Rotary Club of Ginninderra always caters for the weekend evening meals because of the lack of weekend catering facilities at the University of Canberra.

They have a BBQ for the Saturday evening meal in the grounds at UC and on the Sunday they go to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, about 30 km from town for their evening meal.

Both meals had to be changed. Saturday wasn't a BBQ for obvious reasons and they couldn't get to Tidbinbilla Sunday as it was totally destroyed.

During the official opening, on Monday 20 January, the University of Canberra Vice Chancellor wasn't able to be there as he was defending his home. The VC from ANU stood in at the last minute.

His welcome speech was a very emotional

one as he had just returned from inspecting the total destruction of Mount Stromlo Observatory and speaking with the ANU staff from there.

If the students weren't conscious before of where they were and of the circumstances, they certainly were after Prof Ian Chubb's speech.

One evening, when UC "shut down" because of the smoke and the attendant problems with air conditioning, the chef disobeyed orders and remained behind to feed the students.

They were supposed to remain at the Refectory but instead were walked a short distance to the UC's main playing field area and "camped" until bedtime in the safety of the middle of the sporting fields. Emotions ran high.

One of the Queensland students brought her bagpipes. She took them to the playing field and at one stage played "Amazing Grace" - even those of us who may not like the pipes, must be moved when you hear the pipe version of "Amazing Grace". The young pair, male and female, who told me the story, both had tears re-telling it.

The accommodation was perfectly safe all the time but, being university student "ressies" they are not air-conditioned.

Obviously, those who were supposed to spend time at Mount Stromlo didn't. Instead,

the academics involved came to them.

One of the girls told of how a scientist described one of the telescope lenses as looking like a "microwaved jellyfish".

Home hosting was potentially a problem as one of the clubs that was going to the Rotary dinner on the Wednesday night "en masse" was one whose members had the greatest property losses. Everyone else hopped in and all the students were looked after.

The last event DG Ian and Laurel went to was the Science Dinner on Tuesday night.

Emeritus Professor John Sanderman, NYSF Council Chairman, and a really delightful person, spoke a little longer than usual (he normally speaks for about two minutes and welcomes everyone).

He paid a special, and quite emotional, tribute to the NYSF students and staff for they way they had responded to the changed and high-pressure circumstances.

I am proud to be a Rotarian as the NYSF students missed out on nothing under trying circumstances.

The program had to be modified here and there but I doubt the students knew it.

Where academics or staff at institutions the students were visiting had to stay to look after their homes, others stood in,

including returning from leave to help.

Rotarians rallied to ensure they were looked after. And finally, as for the NYSF students and the youngsters who are the NYSF staff ... I am advised that they were wonderful.

They have done Rotary proud and Canberra Rotarians, in turn, did them proud.

**Gold Coast
Year of the Goat
Celebrations**

A reminder from Phil Rosenberg for International Directors about the Chinese New Year Function at The Mandarin Court Restaurant at Mermaid Beach on Sat 8 February 2003.

No fire crackers but the lion will be there.
0412 374 363 or
5538 0254

**Sister Club In
Japan**

I understand that the Rotary Club of Nagoya South East, District 2760, Japan is interested in establishing a sister club relationship with an Australian club.

Interested clubs are asked to contact the club directly. Contact details for interested clubs are:

Estb: 6 March 1969
Membership: 80
Address: C/- Nagoya Marriott Associa Hotel, 4--1-1 mei-eki nakamura-ku Nagoya Japan.

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