

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2014 –2015**

I would like to start by thanking all members for their enthusiastic support of the Club this year. We enjoyed our meetings and each other's company and this set the foundation for another year of service to our community. Ray Barrett with Program responsibility organised interesting and informative speakers contributing to the success of each meeting. The year started with the return of our team from Taveuni, Fiji, having helped finance and build a pre school centre. It was rewarding to receive Meritorious Recognition for this project from outgoing DG Merv Ericson. The year also started with our meeting catering being provided by Tasty-Az. Many visitors have been impressed that our Club actively supports each week the youth with disabilities who work at Tasty-Az and serve our meals. Camp Awakenings occurred early in the Rotary year, and we provided good support for this very worthwhile program, with members at both the Camp and the Recharge at Wandin Hall to show support for the program. Russell Hayes plays a key role in this activity and we thank him. We continued our other Youth programs under the leadership of Pat Cullen and this year put an effort into strengthening relations with Secondary schools, following the Focus on High Schools theme of the Youth District Forum. We thank Pat for his tireless work in this area. We continued our regular youth programs – RYLA, RYPEN, Junior Citizens Awards, and MUNA although our MUNA teams withdrew and were replaced by a team from another area.

Under Carol Pitman's leadership our community presence and support is well recognised. We installed Welcome to Seville signs with community Club badges, painted the Seville Rotunda, supported the refurbishment of the Seville Scout Hall with a \$2400 donation, and are developing a project to erect a Silvan War Memorial. We have succeeded in gaining both a District Grant and an Anzac Centenary Grant for this project which we hope to complete later in 2015.

Other activities that the Community value are the Remembrance Day and Anzac Day services that we organise – this year the number of attendees were almost double those of prior years. Our Australia Day breakfast was another success and while this provides a valued community service it also provided us a surplus of \$3800. Our speakers received positive feedback, as did our choice of award recipients, which included a Paul Harris Fellow award to Michael Halligan. Again, many members were involved and deserve thanks, especially Carol Pitman who led the organisation of the event.

Raffle ticket sales also give us an added community visibility. Our Christmas Trailer Raffle raised \$8700 and the winner was an overjoyed local single mum who could only afford to buy one ticket. We decided to reduce the frequency of our Wood Raffle ticket sales and instead start giving trailer loads of wood to needy families and the response to date has been very favourable. Providing gate services to the Yarra Valley Football and Netball League for their finals later this year (together with Healesville and Upper Yarra Clubs) will provide a new source of funds and visibility of Rotary to a different community group. A large number of members were involved in these raffles but I would like to acknowledge Gavan McIntyre's leadership particularly with the Christmas Trailer. While on the topic of Community Awareness of Rotary, we ran a series of local Radio FM 99.9 programs along with the Upper Yarra and Healesville Clubs which received some community feedback, and the local papers continue to publicise our activities. Thank you Greg Kelson for organising the radio sessions and being an accomplished interviewer.