

RAWCS Southern Region Newsletter June 2024



Rotary Australia World Community Service Ltd. (RAWCS) serves to enable Australian Rotarians, Rotary Districts and Rotary Clubs to assist disadvantaged communities in Australia and Internationally through humanitarian aid projects.

This Newsletter is to update Rotarians in Southern Region with the current information on RAWCS Southern Region. Due to the pandemic and changes in position it is some time since the previous newsletter was distributed.

Rotarians are invited to join the RAWCS Southern Region quarterly meeting to be held via Zoom on Sunday June 23 at 10 am. Contact Southern Region Secretary Virginia Turner at vm.turner@bigpond.com for agenda and zoom link. The Southern Region Annual General Meeting and training day, will be held as an in person meeting at the DIK store in West Footscray on Saturday August 24.

What RAWCS does!

RAWCS facilitates and empowers Rotary projects to do good in the World. This is done in a number of ways.

Projects – volunteer work teams and/or funding for Rotary projects undertaken locally, nationally and internationally;

Rotarians Against Malaria – providing supplies, equipment and volunteers to support the elimination of malaria in our region by 2030;

RARE – collecting and transporting surplus goods from Australia to where they are needed overseas;

Communications – delivering Rotary in action to the public, the corporate sector, philanthropists and governments and linking Rotarians and Clubs with RAWCS activities.

These activities provide sustainable development and relief work overseas and charitable support for people in need of assistance within Australia. RAWCS administers three Tax Deductible funds:

- **Rotary Australia Overseas Aid Fund** – currently supporting 387 overseas projects delivering humanitarian aid in 130 countries;
- **Rotary Australia Benevolent Society** – last year supported 104 compassionate grants to Australians in need;
- **Rotary Australia Relief Fund** – rapid response to accept donations to major appeals disbursing funds to appropriate aid projects.

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In the last 12 months RAWCS has processed AUD\$16M in donations. Significant progress has been made on the RAWCS Strategic Goal of sourcing external funding for Rotary Projects. This has amounted to AUD\$44M in the past five years and RAWCS has developed policies and plans to source further significant external funding to assist and strengthen Rotary projects.

Southern Region

Southern Region includes 6 Rotary Districts, 5 in Victoria and one in Tasmania. A small portion of South Australia around Mt Gambier is also included.

Southern Region contacts

Coordinator	PDG Colin Burns	coord.southern@rawcs.org.au
Secretary	PP Virginia Turner	vm.turner@bigpond.com
Communications	PP Bob Edgar	redgar@netspace.net.au

Below are reports on two recent Southern Region RAWCS projects i.e. Northern Victorian Flood Relief and Rotary volunteer Tonga visit July 2023 - supporting Tongan schools in Health and Literacy. These two projects have been selected from reports made to the quarterly meeting of Southern Region and demonstrate what can be achieved through RAWCS both in Australia and in developing countries.

Project Reports

Northern Victorian Flood relief

Report by Brad Quilliam, National Projects Supervisor RAWCS, March 2024

RAWCS has provided \$500 debit cards to the Rotary Flood Relief efforts throughout the various impacted communities in the RAWCS Southern Region. You will see below there has been a total of **207** (RAWCS - \$500 debit cards) which equates to **\$103,500** to impacted residents throughout the RAWCS Southern Region.

RAWCS has been working through Rotary Districts and Rotary Clubs to support the following:

• Murrindindi VIC	39
• Rochester VIC	62
• Seymour VIC	74
• Northern VIC (Wahring)	2
• Shepparton VIC	30
Total	207

Nationally RAWCS has provided a total of **2038** (RAWCS - \$500 debit cards) amounting to **\$1,019,000** towards the Rotary Flood Relief across various states, throughout many flood impacted communities.

Due to the recent bushfires in our country RAWCS has been active to assist the Rotary Districts and Rotary Clubs supporting their residents.

The effects of drought have been felt in various communities and RAWCS have been offering the \$500 debit cards to assist the hundreds of families impacted by drought.

If there is a need to support those impacted by floods, bushfires, drought, you can request assistance, as funds are available.

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Rotary volunteer Tonga visit - supporting Tongan schools in Health and Literacy by Dr. David Goldsmith Rotary Club of Ballarat West , July 2023

This two-week program involved important new initiatives for Tonga; programs that will benefit many Tongan people, especially children, in different ways.

1. Mobile Dental Van
2. Early learning education books
3. New dental clinic and Sick Bay for Tonga High School
4. Medical and other donations from Melbourne Donations-in-Kind,
5. Clinical Orthodontic training
6. Investigated future needy Rotary projects in Tonga e.g. Alonga handicapped centre, Kolovai school, Tonga College dental project.

Mobile Dental Truck

A low mileage T2 domiciliary dental truck (<3600kms) donated by Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) was delivered to the Tonga Ministry of Health to use in its school-based MaliMali (Schools Preventive Dentistry) program. Before shipping via New Zealand, modifications were made to the power system for Tongan conditions including converting from 3-phase to Single Phase power. All functions of the van can now be operated from a domestic power outlet. This work was carried out by a registered electrician from the Rotary Club of Ballarat East.

Two School Dental Therapists (Liz Cobbledick and Stephanie Veal) were sponsored by DHSV and joined the Rotary team for one week to help to set up and stock the van and to demonstrate its operation and maintenance. The truck was commissioned in an opening ceremony by the Minister of Health for Tonga, Dr. Saia Piukalu, and Vaiola Hospital dental staff, and is now fully operational and in use in Tonga. Shipping was by Melbourne DiK via New Zealand.



The Minister of Health Hon. Dr. Saia Piukalu performs the Handover ceremony for the school dental van

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Teacher Education Books

These new early learning education books we donated are part of a program for teachers to introduce children aged 5-7 to English language literacy and numeracy. It is a professionally designed system of reading and writing, with colouring books and activity cards based on a phonetics system by Of Primary Importance Pty. Ltd. Each system consists of 64 graded learning activities. We delivered 7 pallets (260 boxes of books), sufficient to supply all junior schools in Tonga. Disadvantaged and outer island schools will be allocated first.

The books and the teaching system were prior evaluated and welcomed by the Tongan Education system. These books were a donation from the Rotary Club of Horsham under the direction of Rotary volunteers Jack and Marie Knight. Both Jack and Marie have teaching experience in Pacific Island and Australian schools and are members of previous Ballarat West teams in Tonga and the Solomon Islands.

DiK also donated two pallets of teaching aids such as paper, pencils, jotter pads, textas, and school office kits. Early learning program English program for Rural Tongan schools New Dental Clinic and Sick Bay for Tonga High School.



Early learning program English program for Rural Tongan schools

New Dental Clinic and Sick Bay for Tonga High School. This project followed last year's successful visit when we installed similar dental and medical facilities at Queen Salote College, Apifo'ou College, and Tupou College. This Tonga High School project was specifically requested of our club by the Prime Minister of Tonga last year and we have been pleased to be able to deliver. It was a joint collaborative project with the school and its Alumni for its 75 th anniversary. Ballarat West Rotary helped with the surgery design and provided the dental equipment including two dental chairs, compressors, suction, motors mobile cabinetry, supplies, handpieces surgical instruments, autoclaves, ultrasonics, intra-oral; cameras, etc., The school itself raised \$4.7 million Pa'anga (~AUS \$ 3 million) to provide the building and a library, air conditioning, painting, plumbing, and some cabinetry for the dental clinic. The school prepared the room for the Sick Bay, air conditioning, and a sink. The room was set up under the direction of ICU Nurse John Macdonald PHF. Melbourne DiK provided the 3 hospital beds, a BP monitor, linen, and sufficient medical dressings for many years to come.

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We were honoured by King Tupou VI and Queen Nanasipau'u performing the opening ceremony of this new Rotary facility at Tonga High School.

Specialist Orthodontist, and senior lecturer Dr. Deborah Sykes continued her close clinical association with Senior Tongan Dentist Dr Susitina Piukala, forged in Ballarat back in 2016 and which has resulted in Tongan children being provided with a new cosmetic dental service that otherwise would not have existed. Dr. Sykes did Orthodontic training and provided a large amount of supplies of specialist equipment and supplies for Tonga.



An excellent team of volunteers for Rotary consisted of Dr. David Goldsmith (Team Leader Rotary Club of Ballarat West) Rev. Lauleti Tu'inauvai (Rotary Club of Ballarat West) Dr. Deborah Sykes (specialist Orthodontist) Jack Knight retired teacher (Horsham Rotary Club) Marie Knight (Horsham Rotary Club) John Macdonald (ICU Nurse) Liz Cobbledick (DHSV Dental Therapist) Stephanie Veal (DHSV Dental Therapist) Joan Goldsmith (retired teacher) Lopeti Lanivia – (Tongan schools' supporter)

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Every member of our team played an important role, but I would like to make a special mention of two people in particular. Firstly, thanks to our newest Rotary Club of Ballarat West club member Lauleti Tu'inauvai. His first language, organisational skills, and cultural and spiritual support for the visit proved an invaluable asset to the team and integrated us all into the culture of Tonga. Secondly, our key Tongan partner, the dental engineer Mr. Sioeli Uho Manu (Joe) played a central role in the project from concept to completion and to whom everyone involved owes a huge debt of gratitude. Thanks also go to DiK Melbourne for packing and shipping the containers and for being such an important source of supplies that filled many of our Wishlists. RAWCS and DiK are invaluable Rotary resources.

We had an amazing time; the dates for our visit coincided with a number of Festivals, Feasts, church, and Social events, anniversaries, King's Birthday, Tonga High School celebrations, and the Hailala Mardi-Gras festival, all of which we were invited to participate in, and took full advantage of. A bonus was the perfect weather we experienced throughout the whole time we were away.

We were truly honoured and encouraged by the support these projects achieved from high-profile Tongan dignitaries with the 3 opening ceremonies performed by the Prime Minister of Tonga Hon. Hu'akavameiliku, Hon. Dr. Saia Piukalu, the Tongan Minister of Health, the Chief Dental Officer for Tonga Dr. Sisilia Fusi, the acting Australian High Commissioner Miriam Carter, and King Tupou VI, and Queen Nanasipau'u of Tonga; perhaps the highest accolades one could have for our Rotary project.