



# K O O N G G A

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Rotary monthly theme: June: Rotary fellowship

## ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION SPECIAL EDITION



Sydney airport welcome sign

### One person's impressions from the RI Convention Sunday, 1 June

How clever of the organising committee to promote travel to Homebush by public transport only. Driving my own car to and from Olympic Park and parking there was a breeze!

#### Opening plenary session

Greg Newling, you're a genie, finding us seats through door 9 in the Allphones Arena! Sitting next to our club group, waiting for the first plenary session to start, were a husband and wife – both with the 'Educator' classification – from Kandy in Sri Lanka. I asked him which school he taught at and mentioned that my mother taught in Kandy during the war years. He asked 'was that Mrs Tyler?' He is my mother's godson! That night I located the letter I wrote to my parents in 1979 (when I was back-packing across Asia) and



visited his family and met him, his wife and first son. I had lost contact with the family since then. With odds like these in my favour, perhaps I should spend more time in a casino! What a great start to the Convention! Here's President Tony breaking yet another of his personal taboos by attending his first Rotary International Convention. Does he have any taboos left? Good to see you, Tony!

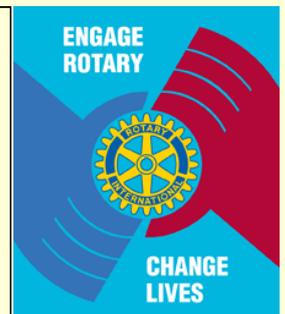


A good 'Welcome to country' by the NSW Public Schools Aboriginal Dance Company . . . a nicely pitched welcome with a bit of humour from NSW Premier Mike

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The club meets every Monday 6.30pm at West Pymble Bicentennial Club, 2 Prince of Wales Drive, West Pymble. Visitors welcome. [www.kuringgairotary.org.au](http://www.kuringgairotary.org.au)



Rotary International  
Theme 2013-2014

Baird . . . a deft welcome by Prime Minister Tony Abbott - \$100 million for Polio Plus is appreciated but might have raised a few Australian eyebrows in light of the recent federal budget cuts . . . the reference to Rotarians 'doing the heavy lifting' might not have gone down well with the voters in the audience.

'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, Oi, Oi, Oi!' to start proceedings each day? Oh, come on guys, stop complaining - it's just a bit of fun and the crowd loves it! (Rotary has to be fun, remember?)

'Human Nature'? My head hurts! I can't hear a word they're singing. In fact, I wonder whether they can sing? Perhaps they're just miming in front of all that noise. Oh, thank goodness - it's over at last. Why was the drummer behind a glass screen?



Introduction of the bigwigs . . . typical Rotary routine. 3 more days of this? Attendance solely out of a sense of duty?

Presentation of the flags of the Rotary World . . . gosh, there are so many I don't recognise and so many recently established countries. Amazing that Rotary has clubs in them already. And so many countries I'd like to



visit. I'll need time off for that.

Got to get back home and do the chores.

## Monday, 2 June

Must check out the free rail transport to Olympic Park - it might be just as quick as driving. Meet a Rotarian from Auckland and have an enjoyable chat between North Sydney and Central. Strangely, breaking into conversation with an Aussie club group on the train to Olympic Park isn't so easy.

## Plenary session 2 - 'Leadership'

Introduction of the Rotary International President's Family - hmm, 2 years away from his family is actually a very significant sacrifice . . . and the RI Board of Directors - interesting to see them in person and appreciate from what widespread countries they come: they must have to do a huge amount of travel . . . and then the Past RI Presidents - some names and faces I know better than others, perhaps reflecting the impact they had; some getting frail - do they have to continue appearing at RI Conventions until they drop?

'Mr Toilet' - what a brilliant (and humorous) presenter of a taboo subject. 'World Toilet Organisation' as a sly take off of the 'World Trade Organisation' - love it. And viewing people who don't have toilets as potential customers, rather than as poor people who have to be

helped - teaching them how to start businesses to make and sell toilets (creating employment and developing the local economy) - establishing a consumer mindset of wanting a toilet so as to 'keep up with the Joneses' - this is fantastic! This is how Rotary should be doing all its projects!

Professor Martin Sylink on how he got a resolution on diabetes prevention through the United Nations - intriguing, but I thought we were going to hear something about advances in prevention, control or cure of diabetes. Frightening worldwide statistics. Is diabetes going to be the next Polio Plus?

Tommy Spaulding on 'changing the world one relationship at a time'. Hey ho, another marketing expert . . . no wait a minute, this is a good story . . . this guy's very engaging . . . gosh, this is really putting together how Rotary can and does change lives and turn people into effective agents for change. Half our club should be here to hear how the Rotary Youth Leadership Academy (that's an interesting variation of the name) and Ambassadorial Scholarships can produce people who really make a difference in the world. Well done, Tommy - that was terrific!

Brett Lee - the usual jokes about baseball and cricket . . . yes, the Mewsic Foundation for disadvantaged Indian children sounds like a worthwhile project . . . I would have liked to hear more about the foundation in action and the results it's getting, but maybe



it's too soon. Good on you, Brett. It's great that you're doing something to improve people's lives.

Oh heck, no time to visit the House of Friendship. Got to get back to my office and keep my clients happy.

Meet a Danish Rotarian on the train to Central and we talk about urban transport, the use of bicycles in Denmark and car driver hostility. He's got his bike with him and is going to cycle in stages to Ballarat, so that he'll be fit to ride from Copenhagen to Paris in time for the end of the Tour De France - and back to Copenhagen! Why's he talking to me? Where are the cyclists from my club? Surely he would have enjoyed cycling around Kuring-gai?

On the train to North Sydney I get talking to a couple from Northbridge Rotary. They've left the Convention early to prepare for a special meeting of their club - it's not the club's normal meeting night - to entertain 12 members of their sister club in Japan. Great idea. How come my club didn't put on something special for visiting Rotarians, even if we don't have a sister club anywhere? Advancement of international understanding, goodwill and peace through fellowship anyone?

## Tuesday, 3 June

The platform at Central is crowded with Rotarians awaiting the train to Olympic Park, all talking animatedly to each other. Where else in the world would you find a platform full of strangers all talking to each other? This is the foundation of Rotary. This is why all Rotarians should go to District Conferences and International Conventions! (Later in the day I relate this experience to

someone else, who says he knew he wasn't amongst Rotarians any more when he got on another train and nobody was talking to anyone else – even if they didn't have their heads down, staring at their mobile phones.)

I talk to a Canadian couple and hear about their tour around Australia, visiting Youth Exchange students they have hosted and Rotarians they have met at other Conventions. I'm starting to realise one doesn't go to the RI Convention – instead you go somewhere for a holiday and include attendance at the Convention as an added bonus.

### Plenary session 3 – 'Take Action'

Allphones Arena. What's Allphones? Never heard of it. Maybe I need to get out more.

Introduction of the Rotary Foundation Trustees – more Rotary routine, but it's good to see the human faces of the Foundation, making the Foundation more than just a legal entity and a source of funds. A good address by the chairman, D K Lee, which develops the feeling of connection with the Foundation. 'Every Rotarian Every Year' was a rather startling idea when it began, but why not?

How many Rotarians will miss \$100? (Memo to self: must renew my Centurion membership.)



'Global Alumni Service to Humanity Award' to Maya Ajmera, founder of 'Global Fund for Children'. It focuses particularly on providing education to children subsisting on the edges of society – 'railway children' in India, children in flood-prone areas of Bangladesh, Afghani girls and so on. What an excellent organisation. Education really is the key to lifting people out of poverty. Maya is on the right track and her establishment of the GFC is a magnificent achievement. This proves the value of Rotary Graduate Fellowships.



Mwila Chigaga on 'gender equality – a prerequisite for development in Africa'. Gosh, she's a good speaker!

And what a powerful message – we need to empower African women. Yet again, it's about promoting education, enabling people to improve their lives

by themselves. Yes, indeed – Rotary needs to focus on spreading education everywhere. This has to be a major part of what Rotary does in future.

Ade Adepitan, simply and engagingly telling the story of how he overcame being crippled by polio, succeeded in Paralympic sport and ultimately led Nigerian polio victims to



demonstrate against their government's inaction, building their self-esteem at the same time.

Another example of the value of helping people to take responsibility for improving their situation. This Convention is getting better and better as it goes on!

Bruce Aylward with an update on Polio Plus and the challenge of final eradication. Another \$5.5 billion dollars needed – that means there's a huge amount of work still to be done. Pakistan: more new cases this year than in all the other countries with new cases put together. A crying need for education of those who stand in the way of vaccination of the children.

### Host Hospitality Night

There's a tumult in my office reception area – oh, it's just my 8 Rotarian guests who have arrived to be driven to my home. Already they're chatting loudly as if they've known each other for years. My 2 Sri Lankan teachers, an incoming District Governor from Seattle and his wife,



a retired South African lady, a Belgian flyer and a speech pathologist and her environmental conservationist partner from California. We set off in two cars and the party just goes on and on. Thank heavens my youngest son is on hand to go and buy extra wine when our guests have imbibed most of the white before we sit down! Louise has cooked up a storm and our guests can't be more appreciative. The conversation is still buzzing when I deliver the last of them to their city hotel around 11.30 pm. Fellowship – you can't beat it.

Now if I can finish the washing up by 1 am, I can still get 4 hours' sleep before going to my regular business breakfast meeting at 6.45 am . . .

### Wednesday, 4 June

Driving in to Olympic Park today – what a pity I'm missing the opportunity to meet a few more visiting Rotarians on the train.

### Plenary session 4 – 'Looking Ahead'

Promotion of next year's Convention in Sao Paulo, Brazil . . . speech by RI President-nominee, K R Ravindran from Colombo – he'll be good . . . report by RI General Secretary John Hewko . . . how come, with a world population of 7 billion, there are only 1.2 million Rotarians? Where are all the other people who want to do good in the world? Surely it shouldn't be too hard to double or triple the number of Rotarians?

Renée Saunders on public-private partnerships – not bad as a law lecture, but what's her point in relation to Rotary?

Ramkumar Raju, Rotaract Representative from Chennai in India – how good to hear of Rotaract flourishing and getting things done. Well done, Ramkumar. That was a great presentation and it's impressive to hear how active Rotaract is in India.



'Seeds of Change' - the winning video in the worldwide Interact video competition, by the Interact Club of



Kathmandu Mid-Town. What a great project – self-funding personal hygiene education for children by children – and what an effective video - see the video link at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0aeV1APvXQ>

What extraordinary talent in a third world country! Could kids in a first world country do any better? Clearly youth has the ability to achieve much – all we need to do is encourage and assist if asked.

Ronald Kawaddwa from Uganda on ‘new generations – now is the time’. 70 per cent of Ugandans are aged less than 25. At 33 years old, Ronald is an elder. There’s a huge pool of young people with the potential to achieve great things. They just need education and opportunity. This can change Africa from the world’s basket case to a continent of accomplishment. Rotary doesn’t need to be defined by age groups – a desire to do good in the world is all that’s necessary. Give young people the opportunity, stand back and let them get on with it! Ronald, you’re another excellent and inspiring speaker!



Kelsi Cox, a Rotary Youth Exchange student and Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, describing a project to introduce tablet computers to all the students in a Fijian school – taking them

way beyond the limited confines of their home village. Think of those Interactors in Kathmandu – what might the Fijian children achieve now? To the doubters of the long-term value of Rotary Youth Exchange and Ambassadorial Scholarships, you just lost the debate!

Where’s President Tony been since Sunday? Going to all the breakout sessions, eh? Well done, Tony!

Can I stay on for the closing plenary session and go to some breakout sessions in the meantime? No, there are 50 emails in my inbox – too much to do in my office. Gee, I wish I had time to look around the project displays and gather ideas. Oh well . . . next time.

### Conclusion

It’s the same old story. You go along out of a sense of obligation and come away excited and inspired with fresh ideas. 3 key messages:

- Rotary must focus on promoting education in a variety of ways;
- We must always aim to help people to help themselves, rather than just doing things ourselves; and
- Open the doors to youth – they have the desire and the ability to do good in the world.

Even though I couldn’t spare time for the breakout sessions, it was well worth attending the plenary sessions. What a shame that more members of my club didn’t make time to attend the Convention or get involved on

the sidelines. Let’s hope those who participated can change a few minds for future conferences and conventions.

## Email from our fun delegate

To all

I have been to the "Is it Fun?" breakout session this afternoon. Wow. What ideas I have to present to our unfun president. The presenter was Larry Long from Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Ideas presented . . . Singing: each week we will have some songs to sing amongst our members. Today was a Johnny Cash song that we sang in the session, but I know we can do better with our choice of songs each week. Of course, this singing is after our weekly Rotary prayer and toasts to our leaders and government . . .

Sergeant: that name goes (only bikie gangs have a sergeant at arms) . . . we need to re-title him ‘Director of Fun’ and he is in charge each week to ensure we have fun at our meetings . . . quiz nights of 3 truths and 1 lie for a member to stand up, tell us these 4 parts from his life and we need to determine which one is a lie . . .

Dressing up: I like this one. To attract lady members, we will have a dress up night during the year when all us males will dress up as females. Luv it . . . I can see Tony in a tutu!

I have so many ideas from this session. Unfortunately, I lost a little concentration by laughing so much that I didn’t note all of them down. Fortunately, there will be a slide presentation available for me to download and present to our president. What a great session . . . I notice there is a similar session on tomorrow "Bringing the FUN back". It’s being presented by a representative of the Rotary Club of Montego Bay, Jamaica. Drums and sticks presumably.

Yours in fun

Roger Desmarchelier

C u tomorrow for more fun . . .

## The sign of a Rotary gang member



### What is Rotary?

I went to the breakout session yesterday titled “How to answer the Question ‘What is Rotary?’”. Totally useless - and when one lady from the UK complained that the recommended words to use would in no way relate to members of the public in her town, she was given the answer “we had it validated by independent experts’. RI has gone to a lot of effort to create their ‘Brand Centre’

website, so they are hardly going to agree with any critics. And a guy I spoke to (a young executive from the UK, living and working in USA) agreed with me . . . so I am working on my own set of words for fireside chats, website etc.

Bob Ivey



I remember some years ago that when Shell Oil used to send Australian managers to Houston to train with

their US counterparts, they ended up needing to hire an anthropologist to unravel why each group ended up at odds with each other. A list of reasons, but at the top was that the US folk talked about their work with almost religious zeal (and jokes about the job were most inappropriate). I met such a man yesterday when we formed groups to learn how to tell our inspiring Rotary story. As his story reached a climax, I thought he might leap to his feet and burst out with The Battle Hymn of the Republic.

Nevertheless, the session did make me aware of how poorly I tell my Rotary story. Note to self: must try harder next term.

Rob Hall

## Regional membership plan

Good morning all from the Rotary train. (Boy, I am going to miss the Sydney Olympic Park Authority express when this week is over.)

Yesterday, I also went to the Regional Membership Plan breakout session, which was interesting for me as a newish Rotarian. I came away with a list of ideas for building membership. Many of the points were familiar (to a member of the fastest growing club in Christendom). Nevertheless, it was helpful to hear them restated in the context of just having been to the inspiring stories session.

It was also interesting to be seated in the centre of a small group of dissenters who, while not in lycra, echoed the thoughts of President Tony . . . "Just do it" and ignore the rules.

A couple of the speakers were pragmatic and insightful. The others seemed to me to be party hacks.

But again, I left the session with some useful ideas and pleased to be a member of RCK where the balance of doing/talk about doing is in the right direction.

Rob Hall

## Polio Plus

DearTeam RCK,

While the breakout sessions so far have been, I suspect, a mixed bag from which we all take the good bits, I thought that the plenary today was a well orchestrated, powerful presentation that left most people... well, me

anyway... excited, energised and raring to go.

The individual speakers were on-message, inspiring, at times very amusing, and above all demonstrated where our individual contributions fit into what is an extraordinary world-wide effort. **The reality of the effort rolled over me like an emotional wave for the first time.** Of course, intellectually I have always known contributing to the elimination of polio was a good thing, but after today, I feel the importance of what we are doing.



Next time we hand over our certificate to a visiting speaker, my head will be full of the images of today and what seems a minor part of club business will carry the aura of today.

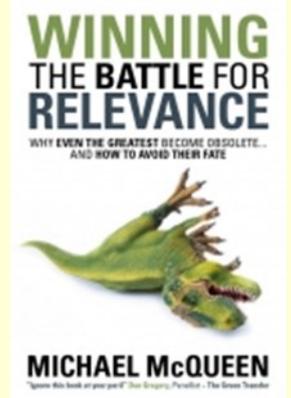
How might we use what was presented today to reenergise our fellow members who didn't make it to Convention?

Rob Hall

## Winning the battle for relevance

Had a good day today – like Rob Hall, I agree the speakers for the plenary session were great.

In the afternoon I attended the session "How your club can win the battle for relevance". Excellent 90 mins by Michael McQueen from RC of Crows Nest, who specializes in helping organizations re-invent themselves and engage the next generation. (**website: <http://michaelmcqueen.net/>**).



### Breakout Session Notes

Complacency - the intoxicating danger of success.

Why we lose relevance: Shift Happens.

Is our club keeping up with technology? If not, we are losing relevance.

### Examples of the dangers of complacency

- Switzerland refused to recognise Seiko & lost relevance as a watch maker.
- In 1970 the CEO of Kodak, when presented with a new invention - the digital camera, said 'hide it' because he saw the main focus of his company was selling photographic film.
- Kodak saw itself as a film company not a "preservation of memories" company. The company folded recently.

Be willing to re-calibrate – understand what is our true

DNA.

If we are not prepared to cannibalise ourselves, someone else will do it.

### Reason to join Rotary

PREVIOUSLY the reason to join was either to serve or to network, but now there are too many options.

### Issues

Demographic changes - lack of place in communities, commuting hours, time.

**Generation Y:** we cannot afford to ignore them or their expectations.

WHY they are not joining:

- They don't know who we (Rotary) are.
- They don't understand what Rotary is about.
- They do not know if they are welcome.
- It's very easy for them to feel on the outer (don't talk about heart attacks in their hearing if they visit).
- They do not know if they have the time - time poor.
- They see Rotary as hard work, confronting and rules.

We must emphasise benefits.

### RE-ENGINEER ourselves

- Identify/define what is our true DNA. What is our relevance?
- Don't allow "it always has been done that way!"
- Look at **every activity** our club does and break it down into every step and analyse each process.
- Ask questions - identify what is outdated and what needs to be reviewed.
- EVALUATE - innovate and ask how it can be done **differently**.
- Identify which of our club practises and processes could benefit from being **re-engineered**.
- RE-FRAME: think of a **new way to do old things**.
- See things through a different lens. Ask a visitor who did not return "WHY?"
- Re-engineering can be a great source of creativity. Why do you do it that way? WHY do we do it all?

### RE-POSITION ourselves

- e.g., do what Volvo did: having identified that the largest market segment buying cars is now a younger generation, Volvo changed its image from 'a safe, family car' to one that would appeal to the young - "sportiness".
- Identify what is it that motivates or impresses potential members.
- What is it that confuses, disappoints or frustrates them?
- Make no assumptions.
- Identify who else is currently meeting their needs.
- How are we currently seen/perceived?
- Google "Rotarian" and you may be surprised at the inappropriate result - e.g. "**Rotarians** are involved in business and professions and membership is restricted to..."
- What are their unknown future needs?
- Where are the gaps - what parts of the community are we not connecting with or reaching?

### Strategies to reach young people

- Look back to plan forward, e.g., have we encouraged Rotaract, exchange students, RYLA graduates, etc to join our club?
- Ask them via Facebook.
- Be flexible - one club he saw makes a big deal of the member of 27 yrs with 100% attendance! (Enough to scare anyone off.)
- Flexibility: wear what you want and come when you can, do what you can.
- Tell your (own) Rotary story - narrative, experience - don't tell me it is right. Show me it is true; tell them of the impacts it has had on me.
- We must get better at telling our stories, our kids may not be hearing. Tell them more of their parent's stories.
- Start small.
- Young people prefer to help out with a project part time but with no commitment to join.
- Necessity is the mother of convention.

Bob Ivey

## Plenary session 3/Child Slavery

I agree [with Bob's comment on plenary session 3 - Ed]. Today had great speakers in the plenary session. The lady from Zambia speaking on her position in the ILO was inspiring, as was the polio victim from Nigeria. Very moving. I went to the session on child slavery this afternoon. Very emotional, but shows what good-minded people can do under the international umbrella of Rotary.

Roger Desmarchelier

## Shelterbox developments



Shelterbox deployment specialist, Becky, demonstrates one of the new solar powered light included in the Shelterbox kit. The light is built into a plastic bubble that can be inflated and hung from tent poles inside and outside a Shelterbox tent. Becky, who has worked with Shelterbox in Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan, says that the lights

are as much for security as convenience - "when each tent has a number of these lights active, it makes it safer for women to go to the latrines at night", she said.

Shelterbox is also in the process of developing a board game, which will be added to the box when it's ready.

