

## 2018/19 Annual Report

The year 2018/19 in Rotary International District 9500 was one of progress with many participants **inspiring** us by the way they supported their communities and each other, and others by the way they responded to the call to *“lead and embrace change with courage, optimism and creativity”*.

It was a privilege to lead the District in 2018-19 when so much was achieved for our local and international communities whilst we laid foundations for a positive future in this fast-changing world.

At the beginning of 2018-19, leaders of District 9500 and clubs were asked to *“collaborate, innovate and take risks”* to meet the needs of clubs, which were earlier identified by the clubs themselves. These included the need for support to embrace change, to improve “the membership experience”, to develop young leaders and to enhance our projects, programs and public image.

Achievements through the year were highlighted in three superb magazine quality productions of **“Collaborations”** by Newsletter Editor Glenda Sherwin-Lane, who was ably supported by Webmaster & Communications Leader Graham Fussen. To see some of these highlights, including the 2019 District Conference Report, click [Collaborations 3](#).

Great examples of successful collaborations and innovative activities in 2018-19 are as follows: -

- Three struggling clubs completed collaborations to form a vibrant new club (Modbury-Golden Grove) and other clubs following this example have since began similar discussions
- No less than nine clubs got together to stage an outstanding Rotary PR day at Semaphore
- District leaders worked with clubs on projects in memory of highly esteemed much-loved past members - the late Elizabeth Briggs and the late Dianne Parcell
- Assistant Governors and District function leaders met as one to support clubs on the needs identified by clubs, rather than meet and report in silos as was the practice in the past
- Many clubs chose to hold their traditional DG visit as a combined club event
- Salisbury’s Rotary, Rotaract and Probus clubs came together to celebrate important milestones
- A valuable mentoring program was developed by Rotaractors in partnership with Rotarians
- Adelaide CBD clubs partnered with the State Governors Leadership Forum to initiate a study aimed at reversing and diversifying our downward membership trends
- Media, PR Branding and Future Directions (Membership) committees combined to address areas where our reach is slipping, (Upper Spencer Gulf and Alice Springs clubs)
- Districts 9500 and 9520 collaborated staging a successful PETS as well as events for Australian Scout Jamboree, Mental Health (Lift the Lid), International Women’s Day and Youth Exchange
- Key leaders in our District served with courage and creativity on a Steering Committee with others from D9520 – an innovative futuristic operating approach was recommended
- The District staged a stimulating conference titled **“Forging Ahead - Into the Twenties”** with 280 delegates attending including 30 Rotaractors – outstanding speakers inspired leadership and participation in change to enable Rotary to adapt and flourish for another century

Progress is always a **team** effort, but it should also be recognised that success invariably starts with the **inspirational** leadership of one or two, which was the case with the above initiatives. Some of these remain “unfinished business”, but the important thing is valuable foundations have been laid.

During 2018-19 we also arrested significant downward membership trends and grew and supported Rotaract as we established another Interact club. The fact that we did all these things whilst we maintained valuable fellowship, continued impactful service projects and programs, supported other charities (including our own) and operated the District on a profitable basis, is commendable. The annual Rotary Foundation and Financial reports herewith confirm our progress and performance.

**A very big thank you** to all members and friends of our Rotary and Rotaract clubs and especially to some very dedicated 2018/19 Club Presidents, District Leaders and Assistant Governors who supported them. Of course, we must also remember our valuable and supportive family members, without whom we could not achieve as we have. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

**In reflecting** on the year-past there is always a danger of taking a short term narrow approach, rather than a wider strategic perspective. The notions of building upon one year to the next, and of sowing, nurturing and reaping over time, are most relevant in Rotary, as is the truism “change is a journey”.

Now, as I write this report some nine months after the end of the 2018-19 Rotary year, it is clear the foundations that we laid are valuable and show foresight. I am certain that this will become much clearer as we navigate the road ahead with the “*wind of change*” now blowing like never in our lifetime.

The current levels of collaboration and innovation to ensure we remain **connected** in these difficult times are outstanding and, as we face inevitable new challenges, thinking and acting “*outside the square*” will, I believe, become the norm.

At this time a wise Chinese proverb sounds a warning...

*“When the **wind of change** blows, some people build walls, others build windmills”*

Clearly the time has come to seize new **opportunities**, to further collaborate, innovate and adapt and, as we do so, to dismantle the ‘walls’ that divide us.

United, lets embrace the future, empowering all to serve in ways that best suit them, respecting the past and bringing with us those who built it. If we do, I am sure Rotary will flourish for another century.

Yours in Rotary service,

*David Egan*

Immediate Past District Governor

24<sup>th</sup> April 2020