

Issue No. 5: December 2019



ROMAC is a project of Rotary districts in Australia and New Zealand

CREATING NETWORKS | IDENTIFYING NEED | TAKING ACTION

Chair Harold Sharp's Message

My ROMAC Friends



With Christmas just a few weeks away, I am sure that, like me, you are busy planning your holiday program. The festive season is a great opportunity to relax, unwind and spend some time with our families and friends enjoying some delicious food and wine and great social interaction. It's also a time to reflect on our present situation and be thankful for the good health and good fortune that most of us, and our families, in Australia and New Zealand enjoy.

Unfortunately, for some in our neighbouring countries of the Pacific region life is not so good, with parents of sick or disabled children who are not able to be treated in their home country, worried about what the future holds.

ROMAC's mission is to bring these children to Australia or New Zealand so that they can undergo the life-changing or dignity restoring surgery they need to enable them to lead a normal life - a life that we take for granted for our children and grandchildren.

Of course, we are unable to help all the children in Oceania who need it, but with your continued financial support we will be able to maximise the number of young patients we can bring to Australia and New Zealand for treatment in the year ahead. I ask, therefore, that you consider donating to ROMAC this Festive Season so we can spread a little more joy to those who desperately need it.

Please visit our website www.romac.org.au to read of the inspiring stories of how ROMAC has changed lives and restored dignity to so many young people from our neighbouring regions.

Best wishes for a very enjoyable Festive Season and a Happy and Healthy year in 2020.



Harold Sharp



Meeting the Teams

The past 10 weeks since taking on the role of ROMAC Chair has been a busy period for Harold as he travels around the country meeting the District and Regional Chairs

and the many volunteers who make ROMAC a possibility.

Last week he, along with the new ROMAC Communications Coordinator (Harold's wife, Gina) spent a couple of days in Canberra and made the most of the opportunity to meet with District 9710 Chair, Sandra Goldstraw and her team and discuss strategies for the future development of ROMAC in the region.

Sandra and her husband, Brian, are currently hosting Vincent and his mum, Cosinta, so it was a great opportunity for Harold to meet one of ROMAC's newest patients.

Harold also had the opportunity whilst in Canberra to meet Dr Michael Croaker who has had along association with ROMAC and has treated many ROMAC patients at Canberra's Centennial Hospital for Women and Children.



District 9710 Team with Cosinta and Vincent
From left Yvonne Robson, Cosinta holding Vincent, Robyn Pearson and District 9710
Chair, Sandra Goldstraw,

Vincent



Vincent arrived in Canberra from his home in the Solomon Islands on 2nd July as a 2-month old requiring surgery to repair a blockage between his oesophagus and his stomach (Tracheo-

oesophageal Fistula) which necessitated him being fed through a catheter in his stomach. He was undernourished and it was several weeks before he was strong enough to undergo surgery. Vincent was operated on at the Centennial Hospital for Women and Children.

Now he is a happy five and a half months old, and although making some progress in his recovery is still not well enough to return home. He is being treated on a weekly basis at the hospital, and it is likely to be several more months before he will be able to return to the Solomons.

Vincent's mother, Cosinta (pictured with Vincent) has been with him throughout his stay in Australia. They are currently being hosted by District 9710's ROMAC Chair, Sandra Goldstraw and her husband, Brian, with assistance from her team members Yvonne Robson and Robyn Pearson, and members of the sponsoring club, Gulgahlin.

Vale: Roselyn



and along with her mother, Anna, lived with Liz and Hans Rupp following her surgery. .

It is with much sadness that we advise of the death of former ROMAC patient, Roselyn, last month.

Roselyn, from the Solomon Islands, was treated for a heart condition at the Sydney Adventist Hospital in October 2015. During her stay in Australia, she was hosted by the Rotary Club of Glenhaven in Sydney's District 9685.

As a happy and healthy young woman, Roselyn returned to the Solomons in time to complete her HSC - which she passed with flying colours, expressing a desire to pursue a career in medicine. She was accepted to study at the University of Papua New Guinea and was in Port Moresby when she collapsed with a suspected heart attack.

She died on 28th October. She was 21.

Our deepest sympathies go to her parents Anna and Jockey, her host mum and dad, Liz and Hans, and her many friends.

Viliame

Update on Viliame

by Glenys Parton, New Zealand ROMAC Chair.

11th November 2019

Since his initial treatment Viliame has spent the day at Auckland's Starship Hospital, mum Talei and David Skinner in support. The morning consisted of several examinations, X-Ray, Echo Cardiogram, Blood Tests, ECG plus general monitoring. The Cardiologist, on reviewing the Echo, decided that a further catheterization was required to stop the leakage of the coronary artery. In the afternoon Viliame had another two devices inserted that hopefully will overcome this problem.

I have been in touch since the procedure and Viliame is fine and has returned to Ronald McDonald house.

This week he will have another Echo and hopefully all will be repaired ok for them to return home.



Viliame, aged 4.

Hold a Barbecue for ROMAC

The Saturday Barbecue at Bunnings has become a Rotary Institution, and has proven to be a very successful way for many clubs to raise money enabling them to carry out their humanitarian and service projects.

I'd like those clubs that hold these barbecues on a regular basis to consider devoting one such barbecue each year in support of ROMAC.

The incredible amount of community awareness and resultant funds that are raised would enable us to give life-changing treatment to many more children from our

neighbouring regions.

Please contact me on chair@romac.org.au or on my mobile 0411 044 691 for more information about this.

