



SIGNPOST

Volume 68, No. 5 30 July 2026

We meet Thursdays at 6pm for 6.30pm at the Lakeview Hotel, McRae Street (TBC weekly)



www.bendigosouthrotary.org.au

www.twitter.com/RotaryBendigoS

Rotary Club of Bendigo South
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President's Report

Hello Fellow Rotarians,

Last week's meeting, we had the pleasure of welcoming Debra Reade, President of the Inner Wheel Club (IWC) of Bendigo, together with her husband, Rotarian Kevin Reade from the Sandhurst Rotary Club. We also welcomed Bernadette Storer, Secretary of the Inner Wheel Club, and Barb Vallack, an IWC member and wife of our esteemed Rotarian, Endel Vallack.

Deb joined Inner Wheel in July 2011 and served as Club Treasurer from 2012 to 2016 followed by Club Editor from 2016-2017. She compiled the Club's 90-year history, which was published for the Club's 90th anniversary celebration in 2023. Deb is now serving her 3rd consecutive year as President and is also in her second year as District Treasurer. During her first 2 years as President, the Club inducted 18 new members, and we hope this growth continues throughout her final presidential year (2026-2027).

Deb talked about her roles, connections and history of IWC. IWC started in England 100 years ago. Members were usually the wives of local Rotarians, According to Deb, the ladies would meet at the upper class and prestigious cafe wearing beautiful dresses, hats and the latest fashions of the time.

In Australia, the first IWC was established in Ballarat in 1931, followed by the Bendigo Club in 1933.

Deb explained that the aims and objectives of IWC include:

- Providing a place where women can support one another, build lasting friendships and show kindness.
- Creating a caring environment where members know they are valued, develop strong connections and enjoy a genuine sense of belonging.
- Encouraging fun, laughter and active participation in club activities.
- Volunteering and organising fundraising activities that benefit the wider community.
- Giving back to the community through service and mentoring programs.

The Bendigo Inner Wheel Club currently has 38 members and is continuing to recruit. Most members are retired ladies. The Club meets on second Tuesday of each month at Mechanic Hall in Eaglehawk and enjoys a coffee catch-up on every 4th Tuesday of each month at an agreed venue.

Members Report/Talk:

Rod Spitty - provided a snapshot and successful report on the recent Science and Engineering Challenge held at Girton Grammar Stadium. A separate comprehensive report follows below.

Endel Vallack – reminded us of the upcoming Census, highlighting a section for volunteering contributions.

Cora and Tony – reminded Members of the upcoming combined Rotary Social Dinner Event (partners are invited) at \$35 per person on 27th August, Thursday, where fellow Rotarian Shishu will be preparing traditional Filipino Cuisine. This will be held at The Rotary Gateway Park in High Street, Kangaroo Flat. A separate invitation will be forwarded soon

Lindsay Jolley - talked about our RAWCS project comprehensively. A detailed report is attached to this week's Signpost email.

Finally, I would like to thank Lindsay for chairing this week's meeting.

Yours in Rotary,
Cora Fuentes-Mahnic
President



*Debra Reade, President of the Inner Wheel Club (IWC) of Bendigo
With Chair Lindsay Jolley standing at the background*

2026 Central Victoria Science & Engineering Challenge

Notes from Rod Spitty

THE ROTARY CLUB OF BENDIGO SOUTH CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

The 2026 Central Victoria Science & Engineering Challenge was held at the Girton Grammar School Stadium on Tuesday, 28 July, bringing together 160 students from six secondary schools across the region.

Participating schools included:

- Girton Grammar School
- Bendigo South East College
- Catherine McAuley College
- Weeroona College
- Creek Street Christian College
- Moama Anglican Grammar

Students competed enthusiastically across a range of hands-on science and engineering challenges, with Girton Grammar School narrowly claiming overall honours after a closely contested event.

The Science & Engineering Challenge is delivered by the University of Newcastle as part of a national program run in partnership with Rotary, industry and business. The program aims to inspire young people to pursue further studies and careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

Michael Casey, Events Manager for the National Science and Engineering Challenge, highlighted the significance of the Bendigo event and the contribution of the local Rotary club. "The Bendigo Science & Engineering Challenge is such an important event for Central Victoria. The Rotary Club of Bendigo South is crucial to its operation and the long-term sustainability of the program. It is a partnership we greatly value and appreciate."

This year also marks a significant milestone, with the Rotary Club of Bendigo South celebrating 20 years of involvement in delivering the Challenge.

The event was facilitated by La Trobe University during its first five years in partnership with the Rotary Club of Bendigo South. For the past 15 years, the Club has taken a leading role in hosting and delivering the Challenge, working alongside La Trobe University, industry partners, local businesses and the broader community. During this time, the Club has also successfully hosted two National Finals.

Rotary Club of Bendigo South Chair, Rod Spitty, thanked the many volunteers, sponsors and partners who have supported the event over the past two decades. "This program would not be possible without the commitment and generosity of our supporters, volunteers and community partners. Their ongoing contribution helps provide local students with an invaluable opportunity to experience science and engineering in a practical and engaging way." Rod commented.

The event currently costs approximately \$12,000 to deliver each year and continues to provide an important pathway for encouraging the next generation of STEM professionals in Central Victoria.







Meet the eight visiting Malaysian Special Education teachers

Rotarians are invited to a graduation lunch to meet the eight visiting Malaysian Special Education teachers before they depart Bendigo and Echuca. The lunch will be held on Saturday 29 August at the Lake View Hotel, 204 McCrae Street, Bendigo. The lunch starts at 12 noon. Meals can be ordered at the bar. Please let Lindsay Jolley know by Monday 24 August if you wish to attend. Phone 0416192032 or email lj@joll.net.

The banner is for one of the three schools taking part in Bendigo and Echuca.

Our Local Lead Partner

INA works exclusively through trusted local partners that ensure a deep knowledge of the needs of the community they belong to and tailored technical expertise.

Bole Bible Baptist Church Child Care and Community Development (BBBC) has implemented integrated development projects for the past 20 years aiming at creating access to opportunities for a better standard of living for underprivileged and vulnerable communities.

INA x Rotary Partnership

The Rotary Club of Box Hill Central, through its entity, We Can't Wait (WCW), has been very active in international water and sanitation projects since 2015, two District Grants, nine Global Grants and five Direct Grants have either been completed or are in progress across India, Ethiopia, and Nepal.

For the past five years (FY 2020-26), INA has worked in partnership with the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central in their capacity as an authorised cooperating organisation that is recognised by The Rotary Foundation and has successfully completed a Global Grant and a Direct Grant in the Shurmo District in Ethiopia in partnership with We Can't Wait (WCW). INA has a proven track record with WCW.

Since July 2024, INA and We Can't Wait have renewed their collaboration through the EWASH project in Ethiopia, and other exciting projects are yet to come!

The total value of all we can't wait projects completed or in progress since inception is AUD\$2,000,000.

Find out more about us

INA International Programs Manager: DavidDeMicheli@ina.org.au

WCW Chair: TonyStokes@weccantwait631@gmail.com

INA   **we can't wait**  

Rotary  **Box Hill Central**

we can't wait 

Ready to visit the EWASH Project in Ethiopia?

ina  **international needs**

The EWASH Project

Since July 2024, We Can't Wait (the registered Business Name of Operation Toilets Australia) and International Needs Australia (INA) have been implementing an exciting project in Ethiopia to improve access to safe water supply, sanitation and hygiene practices for individual households, communities, schools, and health clinics.

Supported participants: around 2,000 adults from the most vulnerable Households and 7,000 children in 15 schools.

Objectives:

- Increased awareness and skills in water service, sanitation and hygiene practices.
- Increased access to improved water and sanitation infrastructure (latrines and handwashing facilities)
- Increased access to and management of water service (water points/lines)

What are we working on?

We're building 100 improved ventilated latrines for disadvantaged families, renovating water points in schools and health centres, conducting awareness and hand washing campaigns in schools and communities on best hygiene and sanitation practices, training girls in preparing sanititation pads from locally available materials ... and much more!



Where and Why

Ezha District, Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, 60 to 80% of communicable diseases are attributed to limited access to safe water and inadequate sanitation and hygiene services. The baseline study showed only 12.6% of households have a latrine, 64.7% of households in our target communities practice open defecation and none of the households in the targeted area have a dedicated place for handwashing with water and soap.

This project will be implemented in Ezha Woreda of Central Ethiopia Region. Only 52% of the schools in the target areas have improved latrines separated for boys and girls, while only 35% of the schools have water sources. Along with schools, the participants of the project will be extremely vulnerable family with no access to sanitation and latrines.

Traditional latrine in Ezha



NEW school toilet



Join the visit!

Join the team from WCW and INA [this coming November 2026](#) in their visit to the project sites to witness the impact of the project and hear from the communities we support on how the intervention is changing their life!

Our local partner will organise meetings with community representatives and groups, visits to schools, health facilities and individual project participants. All in total safety!

Here are tentative dates for the brief itinerary:

- **8th Nov:** Departing from Melbourne
- **9th Nov:** Landing in Addis Ababa and meeting with our partner's Board of Director
- **10th Nov:** Travel to Shurmo (project area) and meeting with the project team
- **11th Nov:** Project visit - schools & farmers
- **12th Nov:** Project visit - health centres
- **13th Nov:** Debrief with the team and travel to Ezha (project area 2)
- **14th Nov:** Project visit - schools & women saving group
- **15th Nov:** Goodbye and travel back to Addis
- **16th Nov:** Visit of Addis Ababa
- **17th Nov:** Visit to the Australian embassy in Ethiopia and departure from Addis Ababa

Total budget (including flights, accomodation, transportation and main meals): **3,750 AUD***
• price may vary slightly depending on the time of booking

Witness with your own eyes the needs and incredible strength of the communities in Shurmo and Ezha, while diving into the beautiful Ethiopian landscape and culture!

For further information, speak to Lindsay Jolley. He took part in the 2025 visit, and strongly recommends it.

Our Club provided \$4,900 in late 2025/26 for two x six unit latrines for school girls.
If you visit you might be able to see them.

Provision of transformer in Ethiopia

Last year our Club provided \$2,500 towards the \$16,330 cost to purchase and install a transformer for running an electric pump supplying water to the Shurmo community in Ethiopia. The following extract from a recent report shows progress on the project,

"...Ethiopia has experienced significant economic and logistical challenges over recent months, including the ripple effects of instability in the Middle East, which have contributed to increased fuel costs and disruptions to the movement of goods and services. Despite these challenges, the community remained committed to the project and successfully mobilised the required local contribution, allowing the initiative to continue progressing. We are pleased to report that payment for the transformer purchase has now been completed. The relevant government electricity authority has commenced installation works, with electricity poles already erected at the site. The next stage is the installation of the transformer itself. During a recent meeting with BBBC team, we were advised that the transformer is expected to be installed by August. Once installation is confirmed as complete, we will provide a further update, including details and pictures to be shared with everyone..."

The Executive Officer of BBBC, Kebede Wolde-Gioges, will be speaking at our Club meeting on Thursday 22 October.

Club's Social Program.

The program committee for this year will be coordinated by Heather, Tony with input from President Cora. We will determine club speakers and meeting process for the meetings conducted at the Lake view Hotel although we will rely on all members to provide ideas and suggest speakers during the coming year.

We are also aiming to have the last meeting each month where possible as a social/ excursion event to be organized at other locations other than the Lake View Hotel. We are asking **each non-board member** to take one turn during the year to organize working in groups of 2 to 3 others to help organize. These events could be a booking for dinner at a café, hotel or restaurant, a visit to another rotary club, a workplace or tourist venue excursion are some examples. These events **do not** necessarily have to be held on a Thursday night but within the scheduled week. We are looking for and encouraging your ideas.

Members, please refer to the attached club social program attached as there has been some slight amendments and some inclusions.

Both Mark and Paul Gibbons have volunteered to assist Glenn with the Christmas Party arrangements so thank you, no further volunteers needed for this event.

The event at the end of August has further progressed in that Shishu has offered to prepare the meal and it will be held at Gateway Park and will be a joint meeting now with the Kangaroo Flat members.

More information will be forthcoming as final arrangements are sorted.

The first vocations outing has been moved forward a month to September with Rod to arrange but I am sure he would welcome at least one member to assist in putting this night together. The only free slot now before Christmas is October 22. President Cora has already engaged speakers for a special night on October 29. It would be wonderful if during this week we could see two or three hands in the air to arrange an activity for October 22. There are just two spare spots in the new year and again early commitments to those would be much appreciated.

Tony Plant joint programs coordinator.

Volunteers wanted

Sunday August 23 rd	La Trobe Uni Open Day Edwards Road Plaza	8am – 1 pm 6 Volunteers
Sunday August 23 rd	RMIT Flight School BBQ Bendigo Airport	10am – 2 pm 3 Volunteers
Friday November 20 th	La Trobe Uni	11am – 1 pm - 4 Volunteers
Sunday November 29 th	Mandurang Christmas Market BBQ	9am – 3pm 2 Shifts
Monday December 7 th	CFMEU Christmas BBQ Bendigo Jockey Club	9am – 3 pm

Please contact Volunteer Coordinator George Ellis if you can assist.

Email: george_ellis55@outlook.com

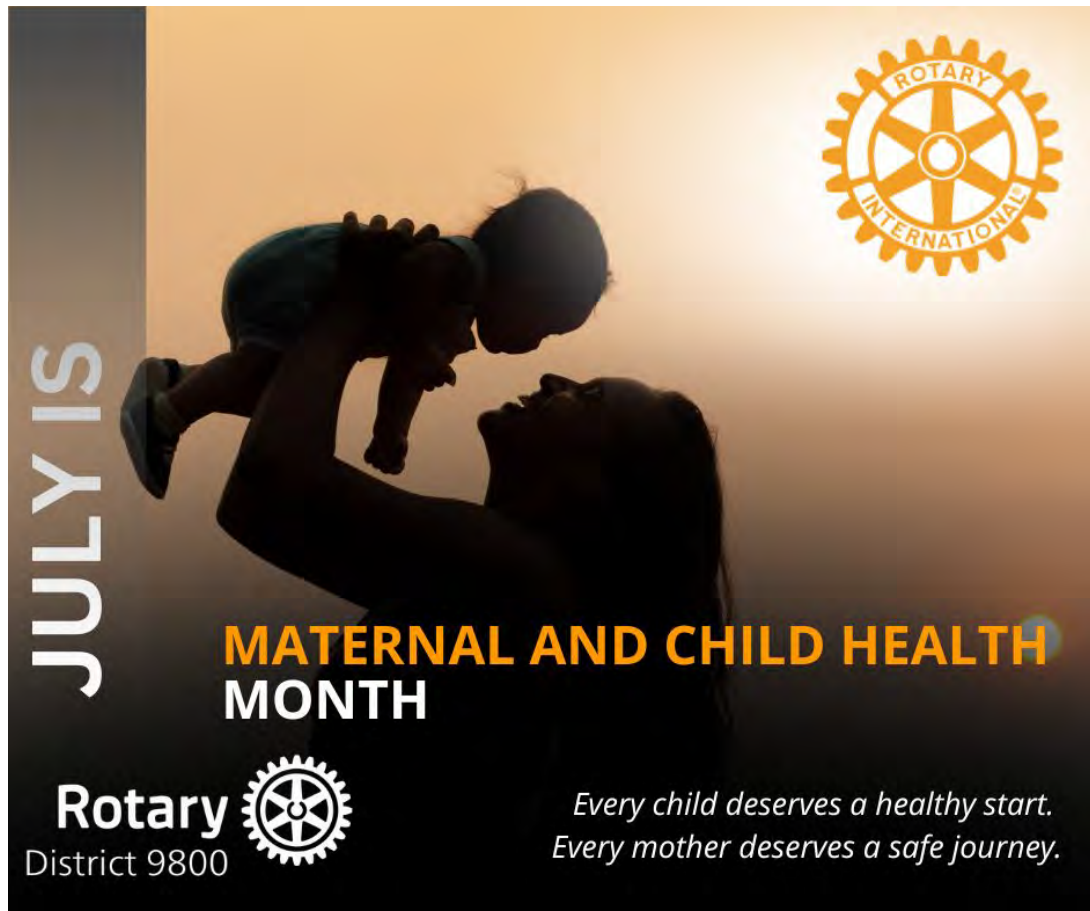
Mobile: 0438353414

The Club Facebook Page

Tony is now managing our Facebook page. Please remember to take pics of your Rotary activities and send with a brief description to Tony - plantony24@gmail.com) (not to his Bigpond address).

Meeting program

Date	Speakers	Chairperson	Meet & Greet	Venue
AUGUST THEME: MEMBERSHIP & EXTENSION				
Thurs 6 Aug	Shishu Domondon – Member Talk	Jan	Tony & Craig	Lake View Hote
Thurs 13 Aug	Gold Fields Railway – John Shaw	Peter	Merlyn & Jan	Lake View Hote
Thurs 20 Aug	Street Peace -Holly Phillis	TBA	TBA	Lake View Hote
Thurs 27 Aug	Social night will be held at Rotary Gateway Park, High Street, Kangaroo Flat at 6:00 pm, featuring a delicious Filipino dinner prepared by Shishu Domondon.			



THE FOUR WAY TEST

Is it the TRUTH

Is it FAIR to all concerned?

Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?

Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned

THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

The object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

FIRST.

The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

SECOND.

High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

THIRD.

The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;

FOURTH.

The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

WHO'S WHO?

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola

DISTRICT 9800 GOVERNOR

Graeme Hope

DISTRICT 9800 NC VIC COMMUNITY LEADER

Peter Shephard

CLUB PRESIDENT

Cora Fuentes-Mahnic

VICE PRESIDENT

Lindsay Jolley

SECRETARY

Bernie Young

TREASURER

Peter Kilpatrick

COMMUNITY SERVICE DIRECTOR

Endel Vallak

YOUTH SERVICES DIRECTOR

Rod Spitty

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR

Heather Nixon

MEMBERSHIP, COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING DIRECTOR

Tony Plant

CLUB SERVICE DIRECTOR

Tony Plant/Gary Pinner

FUND-RAISING and MAJOR PROJECTS DIRECTOR

Gary Pinner

VOCATIONS DIRECTOR

Rod Spitty

FOUNDATION DIRECTOR & IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Lindsay Jolley

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Shireen Yeoh

CLUB PROTECTION OFFICER

Geoff McKinna

D9800 Goldfields Cluster Club Meeting Times

RC KANGAROO FLAT: Monday 6pm, Rotary Gateway Park, 22A High Street, Kangaroo Flat
Secretary - Geoff Wakefield: 0407 561 997

RC BENDIGO: Tuesday 12:45pm, Bendigo Club, Park Street, Kennington
Secretary: Daniela Ionescu – d.ionescu@latrobe.edu.au

RC ECHUCA MOAMA: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Tuesdays of month - 6 for 6:30pm,
Rotary Park Clubrooms, Rose Street, Echuca

RC BENDIGO SANDHURST: Wednesday 7am for 7.30am start,
Peppergreen Farm, 40 Thunder Street, North Bendigo
Secretary: Paul Henderson – 0428 177 314

RC ROCHESTER 2nd & 4th Thursday at 6.30pm at the heritage courthouse,
community chat is on the 3rd Thursday at 8am at Rochester Hotel

RC EAGLEHAWK: Wednesday 6pm,
Mechanics Institute Hall, 8/12 School Street, California Gully
Contact 0428 468 298

RC CASTLEMAINE: Wednesday 6:30pm, The Cumberland Hotel
Secretary - Lyndal McClure: 0438 391 160

INNER WHEEL CLUB of BENDIGO: 11.15am, 2nd Tuesday of the month,
Mechanics Institute Hall, 8/12 School Street, California Gully
Bernadette: 0407051722