

# Rotary Club of Carlton's Meeting with Ian Riseley OAM



Rotary Club of Carlton held its inaugural Global Leadership Program, with Guest Speaker Ian Riseley, President of Rotary International 2017-2018, at Graduate House on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October.

Ian Riseley, who has been a Rotarian since 1978 and has served Rotary International and the Rotary Foundation in various capacities, spoke on the topic of *How Can I make the World a Better Place?: The Power of Volunteerism*.

Ian said that one of the questions we all need to ask ourselves is: "How important is it to make a difference in the world?" If making a difference in the lives of others matters to you, then Rotary provides an opportunity for you to volunteer to help others, but it also creates a space for volunteers to develop their self-esteem. Addressing the subject that younger people do not care about volunteering and giving back to community, Ian said that younger people are just as interested in volunteering as older generations. However what young people will not do is waste their time. Rotary, therefore, is looking at ways for younger people to get involved in Service Projects (another word for volunteering). In discussing the importance of volunteering, Ian also addressed another question often posed: "What is in it for me?" Responding to this question, Ian listed four reasons for joining Rotary: 1) friendship with good people from diverse backgrounds; 2) personal development; 3) professional development; and 4) making a difference. About the last point, Ian said that Rotary's global achievements and impact have been possible because of the fellowship of millions of Rotarians who come together to do good in the world. "If I wanted to eradicate polio by myself, it would have been impossible. But together with 1.2 million Rotarians, we have been able to almost eradicate polio."

Following Ian's presentation, members of the panel were seated for a Q & A with the guests. On the panel was Dr Kerry Bennett (CEO/Head of College at Graduate House), Ludovic Grosjean (Rotaractor and Principal Consultant at OceanX), Dale Hoy (District Governor Nominee for Rotary District 9800 in 2021-22), Ian Riseley, Dr Parisa Shiran (Friend of Rotary Club of Carlton and Content Writer at Graduate House) and Dr Murray Verso (twice President of Rotary Club Williamstown and District Governor 2014-15). The panel discussion was moderated by Keith Ryall (Rotary Club of Carlton and Governor of Rotary International District 9800 in 2011-12) and Father Michael Elligate AM (Rotary Club of Carlton).

The panel discussed a wide range of issues and questions including: the importance of volunteer work in the world,

especially that done by Rotarians, the challenges of attracting new members to Rotary, the pressure of younger peoples' study schedules and time constraints for volunteering, global challenges facing member-based organisations like Rotary, how to market Rotary and the crucial impact it has had to make world better, the positive effects of volunteering and helping others on one's physical and mental health, how to communicate the severity of global challenges which is happening elsewhere in the world — such as millions of children dying due to disease and war — to potential volunteers, the need for more flexibility for Rotary membership, and the benefits of investing in technological advances of our time for wider Rotary outreach.



From left: Dr Kerry Bennett, Ludovic Grosjean, Dale Hoy, Ian Riseley OAM, Dr Parisa Shiran and Dr Murray Verso

At the end of the panel discussion, panellists were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for their contribution on the panel, which states that the Rotary Club of Carlton has donated a Mosquito net as part of the Club's commitment to Rotarians Against Malaria Project.

President of Rotary Club of Carlton, Professor Tony Jorm thanked Mr Casey J. Tan (Rotary Club of Carlton) for the great organisation of the evening and for inviting Ian to speak to Rotarians. Casey then announced a \$20,000 donation from the Australian Community Foundation to Rotary's End Polio Project.

Following the event, Parisa who has recently completed her PhD at The University of Melbourne in comparative literature, said there is a poem by Maya Angelou (1928-2014), American poet and civil rights activist, that captures Rotary's commitment to honor and goodwill towards all men:

## Human Family

*I note the obvious differences  
in the human family.  
Some of us are serious,  
some thrive on comedy.*

*Some declare their lives are lived  
as true profundity,  
and others claim they really live  
the real reality.*

*The variety of our skin tones  
can confuse, bemuse, delight,  
brown and pink and beige and purple,  
tan and blue and white.*

*I've sailed upon the seven seas  
and stopped in every land,  
I've seen the wonders of the world  
not yet one common man.*

*I know ten thousand women  
called Jane and Mary Jane,  
but I've not seen any two  
who really were the same.*

*Mirror twins are different  
although their features jibe,  
and lovers think quite different thoughts  
while lying side by side.*

*We love and lose in China,  
we weep on England's moors,  
and laugh and moan in Guinea,  
and thrive on Spanish shores.*

*We seek success in Finland,  
are born and die in Maine.  
In minor ways we differ,  
in major we're the same.*

*I note the obvious differences  
between each sort and type,  
but we are more alike, my friends,  
than we are unlike.*

*We are more alike, my friends,  
than we are unlike.*

*We are more alike, my friends,  
than we are unlike.*

Rotary, Parisa said, gathers all the differences (different humans, different professions, different talents and skills, different cultures and languages) for the common purpose of serving the human family — because we are more alike than we are unlike. Rotary is the human family.

Past District Governor Keith Ryall shared the thought that Rotary's power comes from gathering people of all professions in the service to society, citing the following poem by the American essayist and poet, Ralph



*From left: Mrs Carolyn Tan, Mr Ian Riseley OAM  
and Dr Murray Verso*



*Mr Ian Riseley (left) and Father Michael Elligate AM  
addressing the attendees*

Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) which was quoted in the autobiography of late Fred Hollows AC (1929-1993):

“To laugh often and much; To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.”

This certainly is what Fred Hollows achieved through his remarkable eye surgery procedures which restored eyesight for thousands of people in Australia and many other countries; and it is what Rotary Volunteers are trying to do all around the world.

At the end, as Paul Harris, the Founder of Rotary said in 1933, Rotary gathers representatives of all walks of life, all countries and professions, “trying to make the words of Robert Burns (18<sup>th</sup> century Scottish poet and lyricist) come true: ‘The time will come for all of us where man to man shall Brother be for a’that.’”

