



Let's SAVE THE WORLD

GLOBAL WARNING

With both Rotary International president Ian Riseley and RI president-elect Barry Rassin putting the environment firmly in the spotlight, *Rotary Down Under* has committed to doing its part for the planet, with a new section each issue dedicated to environmental issues. In this, our inaugural Global Warning feature, we look at the plight of the rhino and how the Rotary Club of Kenton-on-Sea, South Africa, and the Rotarian Action Group for Endangered Species are helping.



The world sighed as Sudan, the last male Northern White Rhino on earth, breathed his last breath.

Every year, at least 10,000 species disappear forever, a decline intrinsically linked to humanity's ever-increasing global footprint. To give perspective, 10,000 years ago, humans amounted to just 1 to 2 per cent of land mammals; in modern times, we and our livestock add up to 97 per cent of mammals by weight.

Our impact isn't restricted to land, with pollution and overfishing decimating underwater food chains and species. Bluefin tuna, which sell for \$100,000 per fish, have decreased by more than 96 per cent in the

Northern Pacific Ocean, with 90 per cent of the fish caught too young to have reproduced.

And change is becoming faster. A 2017 Sussex University study revealed flying insect numbers have plummeted by an astonishing 76 per cent in the past 25 years, a shocking decline for species underpinning the food chain and lifecycle of plants.

"A solitary species has, in a heartbeat of geological time, overturned and routed half a billion years of evolutionary history," environmental commentator John Gibbons said.

The frustration for many environmentalists is that human ingenuity has developed technologies and the knowledge to circumvent many of the ecological tragedies taking place around us. The white rhino did

not need to vanish; the Great Barrier Reef is not doomed to disappear.

And it is in our own interest to prevent the destruction of our world, for purely selfish and humanitarian reasons if nothing else. We all know what happens to animals whose habitat is destroyed. We must ask ourselves, what will happen to humanity as our environment collapses around us?

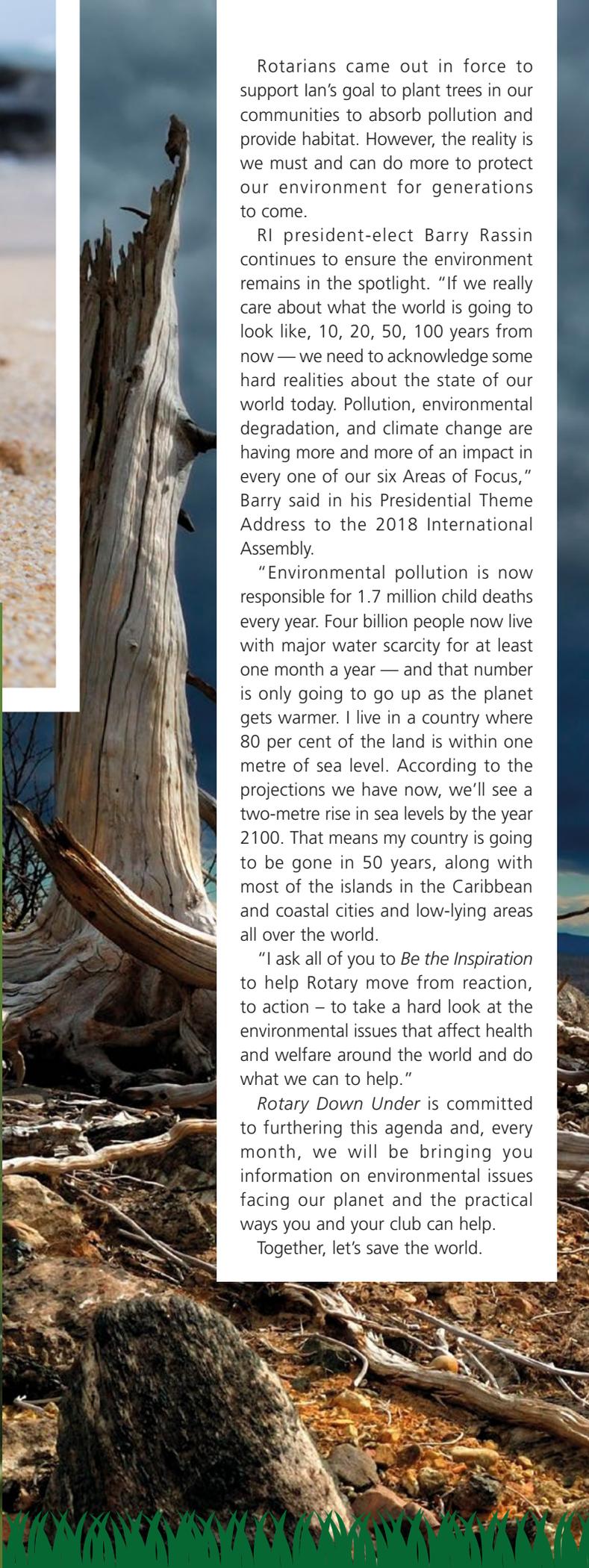
"Environmental issues are deeply entwined in every one of our *Areas of Focus* and cannot be dismissed as not Rotary's concern," RI president Ian Riseley said in last month's edition of *Rotary Down Under* ("Putting the Environment Back of the Agenda", pg. 5). The health of our planet is not only necessary to produce clean air, water and food, but also to ensure economic prosperity and peace.





GET YOUR PROJECT IN PRINT

If you or your club have an environmental-focused project you would like published in *RDU*, please send a brief outline of the project and a selection of high resolution images to editorial@rotarydownunder.com.au with 'Environmental Article' in the subject line.



Rotarians came out in force to support Ian's goal to plant trees in our communities to absorb pollution and provide habitat. However, the reality is we must and can do more to protect our environment for generations to come.

RI president-elect Barry Rassin continues to ensure the environment remains in the spotlight. "If we really care about what the world is going to look like, 10, 20, 50, 100 years from now — we need to acknowledge some hard realities about the state of our world today. Pollution, environmental degradation, and climate change are having more and more of an impact in every one of our six Areas of Focus," Barry said in his Presidential Theme Address to the 2018 International Assembly.

"Environmental pollution is now responsible for 1.7 million child deaths every year. Four billion people now live with major water scarcity for at least one month a year — and that number is only going to go up as the planet gets warmer. I live in a country where 80 per cent of the land is within one metre of sea level. According to the projections we have now, we'll see a two-metre rise in sea levels by the year 2100. That means my country is going to be gone in 50 years, along with most of the islands in the Caribbean and coastal cities and low-lying areas all over the world.

"I ask all of you to *Be the Inspiration* to help Rotary move from reaction, to action – to take a hard look at the environmental issues that affect health and welfare around the world and do what we can to help."

Rotary Down Under is committed to furthering this agenda and, every month, we will be bringing you information on environmental issues facing our planet and the practical ways you and your club can help.

Together, let's save the world.



RAGES AGAINST RHINO POACHING

Rhino poaching has reached crisis point. Over the past decade, the slaughter of the iconic species has increased exponentially. In 2007, only 13 rhinos succumbed to poaching attacks in South Africa. Last year, some 1028 rhinos were killed – almost three per day. Every death represents a massive blow to a species on the brink of extinction.

“In 2007, only 13 rhinos succumbed to poaching attacks in South Africa. Last year, some 1028 rhinos were killed – almost three per day.”

Demand for rhino horn comes primarily from Asia, especially Vietnam, where it is erroneously believed to have medicinal properties or to induce a “high” when mixed with water or alcohol. Horns are also increasingly put on display as exclusive status symbols demonstrating their owner’s wealth.

The Rotary Club of Kenton-on-Sea, South Africa, has taken up the challenge to help save the rhino by sponsoring the Chipembere Rhino Foundation to purchase tracking collars. When asked what more Rotary could do to help rhinos, world-renowned veterinarian and conservation expert Dr William

Fowlds answered, “Create awareness across the world”.

In response, the club organised a team to travel to the Rotary International Conference’s House of Friendship to spread the word of the rhino’s plight. Every year, the club also hosts a Rhino Run, with over 500 people coming to run over Kenton-on-Sea’s white sand beach in support of conservation.

In March 2016, the club was devastated to learn three rhinos had been poached at the nearby Sibuya Game Reserve.

“These were ‘our’ rhinos and we share the grief and outrage of the Sibuya team,” said the club of the attack. “Well done to the team of dedicated professionals who were able to capture and relocate two surviving youngsters to a nearby rhino orphanage, and to Dr Will Fowlds and his team for all they tried to do to save their dad, Bingo.

The Rotarian Action Group for Endangered Species (RAGES) visited the Rotary Club of Kenton-on-Sea in May 2015, where they also visited several conservancies, including Sibuya.

“We met Bingo the male rhino and his two wives, who both had calves,” past RAGES chair John Glassford, of the Rotary Club of Coolamon, NSW, said. “Bingo was a lovely rhino, so friendly. He came up to our safari vehicle and scratched his horn on the bumper bar, close enough that I could touch his back. It is a monstrous thing for such gentle, innocent creatures to

have met such an end because of the sheer foolishness of humans.

“The calves were thankfully left alive, though orphaned – no horn, no value. As they age and grow horns, there is real fear they could meet the same horrendous end as their parents. RAGES is part of the fight to try to stop that from happening.”

“The Rotary Club of Kenton-on-Sea, South Africa, has taken up the challenge to help save the rhino by sponsoring the Chipembere Rhino Foundation to purchase tracking collars.”

The Rhino Run continues, fighting to ensure the local public support and understand the importance of preserving rhinos’ lives. Further, together with the Rotary Club of Kenton-on-Sea, the Rotary Action Group for Endangered Species has also developed RAGES International Survival Kits (RISK) ‘boxes’ available for purchase by Rotary and Rotaract clubs.

The boxes provide equipment for those on the ground ensuring protection and survival of rhinos against attacks by organised poaching gangs and syndicates. Four different levels of RISK Boxes are available, starting at US\$500.

For more information, visit www.endangeredrag.org/risk-boxes •





A Sibuya Game Reserve guard grieves over Bingo's body, after finding him slaughtered by poachers.