

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

A number of Rotary clubs in New Zealand and Australia have produced extraordinary fundraising results through constructing houses for sale. Businesses have proven all too eager to help such projects, providing services and materials free or at cost.

While these fundraisers take years of planning and elbow grease to complete, the payoff is huge. The Rotary Club of Levin, NZ, created a transportable house for removal by the buyer to land purchased separately. The Rotary Club of Hobart, Tas, and Rotary Club of Cobram, Vic, meanwhile, were able to offer combined house and land packages. Likewise, Rotary Dream House – a joint effort of the six clubs based in Invercargill, NZ, previously covered in the May 2018 edition (page 14) of Rotary Down Under – raised a tremendous amount for community programs.

Take a look to see how it's done – bricks and mortar may be the money-spinner your club has been looking for!

A HUG the size of a house

The Rotary Club of Hobart, Tas, HUG House project started as an idea – to build a new house on a large, rural-type lot, with profits from its sale directed towards community projects.

At the time, Rotarians Renzo and Catriona D'Orazio and their family were developing Braeview Estate, a rural property in Old Beach within an easy distance of the city. The D'Orazio family decided to donate a building lot for the HUG House Project, and Wilson Homes later joined the project to manage construction.

Through Wilson Homes, around \$200,000 in materials, services and supplies were donated to build a 241m², four-bedroom home. Much of the work on the building was donated or provided at cost. Renzo and Catriona worked with Wilson Homes to oversee the project together.

"The 'HUG' part of the name stands for 'Help Unleash Greatness,'" Catriona said. "We imagined this project as a way to bring segments of the community together – trades, suppliers, Rotarians, partners and friends, and various other helpers – in a project to help others. In doing so, it would unleash greatness in each of those involved, as well as within the community, through the projects benefiting from the profits."

Construction was completed at the end of May 2018, after which landscaping the grounds began. Clennett's Mitre 10 Kingston was extremely generous in arranging supplies of plants, mulch, loam, and other landscaping materials. Long-time Rotarian Bill Casimaty donated turf for the garden through his business, StrathAyr Instant Lawn.

Renzo spent many hours in his dozer, excavator and grader preparing

and finishing off the site, as well as constructing the driveway to the home. Rotarians gathered over several weekends to plant, lay turf and finish the landscaping.

Over 110 people attended the grand opening in June, with several offers subsequently received for the house. The house finally sold for \$685,000, from which the Rotary Club of Hobart will receive around \$500,000 in net profit.

The first recipient of HUG House funds is the West Moonah Community House, allowing them to expand the workplace area and improve the amenities of their Men's Shed facility.

The club couldn't be more pleased with the results.

"The project was one giant HUG, embracing and 'helping unleash the greatness' in all involved just as we had hoped – a HUG the size of a house," Renzo said. •





Levin Rotary
CHARITY HOUSE
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Levin Charity House

In 2015, the Rotary Club of Levin, NZ, launched its project to create a transportable house for auction.

The community response was enormous when Rotarians canvassed locals for support. A vacant portion of land in the centre of Levin was offered to the club as a building site. Building materials were donated or provided at cost, tradesmen offered to work for free, and money poured in from fundraisers organised by various businesses. Even the local council came to the party by waiving the usual fees required for such a development.

In August 2016, with all documentation and planning finally in place, the building of the house commenced, however, a number of hurdles still needed to be overcome.

Many builders were over committed due to a boom in the housing market. This also affected all related trades and caused a slowdown in the staging of the build. Additionally, Levin experienced a very wet summer, with an even wetter winter to follow. On the plus side, the housing market had become hotter, meaning the anticipated auction price was higher than original expectations.

The Charity House went under the hammer in April 2018, completed just in time thanks to the hard work of everyone involved. There was a steady and vigorous number of bids, resulting in the 103m², three-bedroom Charity House bringing in more than \$190,000 for the club.

Allowing for GST, accounts outstanding and repayment of seeding funds loaned by the club, this enabled the Rotary Club of Levin to make its largest donation to date of \$100,000 to the Te Hinaki Education Trust – which it had previously supported through a \$10,000 donation, added to by a \$5000 district grant.

Te Hinaki Education Trust was established to provide computers for primary and secondary students with families in the Horowhenua area, who would struggle to afford their purchase otherwise. Digital access is vital today to complete academic studies successfully, meaning such children would otherwise be left behind. Computers are provided at a minimal deposit, with low weekly repayments, and insurance against loss or damage is included.

To find out more about how the Charity House project was undertaken, contact Barry Rollinson via barry.rollinson@gmail.com •



Cobram Charity House

Two years of hard work has paid off for the Rotary Club of Cobram, Vic, which built and sold a house with the goal of helping refurbish Ottrey Lodge aged care facility.

The project was the brainchild of club member and Moira Shire Mayor Libro Mustica, who volunteered his vast experience in the building industry to organise the construction.

Building was completed by tradespeople volunteering their expertise, Rotarians and members of the public keen to lend a hand. Many local businesses volunteered to offer financial support or in-kind donations.

The brick-veneer, three-bedroom house sold this year for \$380,000, with the club presenting a cheque to Ottrey Lodge for \$143,773.

Ottrey Lodge has always been close to the club's heart. In the mid-1980s the Rotary Club of Cobram was, in fact, the instigators of the project to build the aged care facility, which hosts 38 beds and 28 independent living units. Rotary club members have been involved on the board of the not-for-profit ever since.

In recent years, it became increasingly urgent to bring the facility up to modern standards. The refurbishment will also include the addition of a new dementia wing. With a shortage of aged-care accommodation in the area, it is a much-needed upgrade.

"It was a great project, the results are fantastic and it's a great success for the Rotary Club of Cobram to finalise things and look forward to another big project," Libro said. •

