


Doing good is good business



A man in a dark suit and white shirt is walking from left to right in a brightly lit hallway. In the foreground, a blurred figure of a person in a white shirt and dark pants is walking in the same direction, creating a sense of motion. The background is a light-colored wall with several circular holes or vents. The overall lighting is warm and bright, with a strong yellowish glow.

Unlike conventional corporate models, where business and moral decision making can be clearly differentiated, in the case of Rotary, *Doing Good* is our business – the two are intrinsically linked. With Corporate Social Responsibility moving from the realm of voluntary self-regulation at the level of individual organisations, to mandatory schemes at regional, national and even transnational levels, Rotary could not be better placed to lead the CSR charge through both example and collaboration.

The Kowhai Project

Rotary Club of Greymouth, NZ

Grey Base Hospital meets the needs of a community of 40,000 people stretched over 400kms of harsh coastline along the west coast of the South Island of New Zealand. In recent times, it was provided with government funding for a much-needed rebuild, however, a board member of the West Coast District Health Board soon realised the funding wasn't going to be enough.

The shortfall would leave the hospital board unable to fund the decoration and installation of a play area in the children's ward, planting and furnishing of an internal courtyard and the construction of an outdoor garden area for rehabilitation and relaxation. This would have been a great loss, as new research indicates that when patients are able to connect with nature in a hospital setting, they recover up to 50 per cent faster, require less pain relief and are discharged earlier.

Dr Greville Wood, a rural practitioner and then president of the Rotary Club of Greymouth, NZ, invited a board member to speak to the club. The presentation led to an immediate commitment of support and the creation of the Kowhai Project – deriving its name from the native New Zealand tree.

The funding target of the Kowhai Project is \$350,000. One year into the project, \$165,000 has been raised through the sale of raffle tickets and the generosity of individuals and businesses contributing money and goods. Other local groups have also come on board, including Greymouth Lions and the neighbouring Rotary Club of Hokitika, which is assisting with promotion and fundraising in their local community. The Greymouth parent's centre organised a colour rush (a fun run in white t-shirts, where participants get splashed with colourful powder) to support the project, raising \$5000.

The Rotary Club of Greymouth has now entered a three-year contract with Tai Poutini Polytech, based in Greymouth, which trains carpentry apprentices and, as part of the training, builds a house that is then auctioned off. The Rotary Club of Greymouth has undertaken to project manage the build by gaining sponsorship for the supply of the building materials and some subcontractors,

An artist's impression of the planned play area in the children's ward of Grey Base Hospital and Integrated Family Health Centre.



on the basis that profits from the eventual sale of the house come back to the club, which will increase the funding for the Kowhai Project even further.

A number of Kowhai tree saplings are currently being nurtured by Shantytown, a local tourist business, and will be planted along the driveway to the new hospital as a tribute to the

community's hard work through the Kowhai Project.

The rebuild of the hospital is well underway and should be completed by early 2019. Local newspaper, *The Greymouth Star*, is regularly printing stories keeping the community informed on the progress of the project. It is well-known within the community that this is a Rotary-led project, which is increasing

the public profile of Rotary immensely.

As Rotary seeks to modernise and become more relevant, it should be alert to opportunities to partner with community organisations and corporates, as together we can make a much bigger impact than we could alone. Our collaborative effort is certainly producing wonderful results in Greymouth. •



An artist's impression of Grey Base Hospital and Integrated Family Health Centre rebuild.