

TOGETHER, WE
INSPIRE

Christchurch: Strength in Solidarity



In the wake of the recent Christchurch tragedy, an outpouring of support has been seen throughout New Zealand and around the world. Thousands have gathered at vigils and tributes held across the globe in remembrance of the 50 people killed in two Christchurch mosques on Friday, March 15.

March For Love

By Shirish Paranjape
Rotary Club of Christchurch New Horizons, NZ

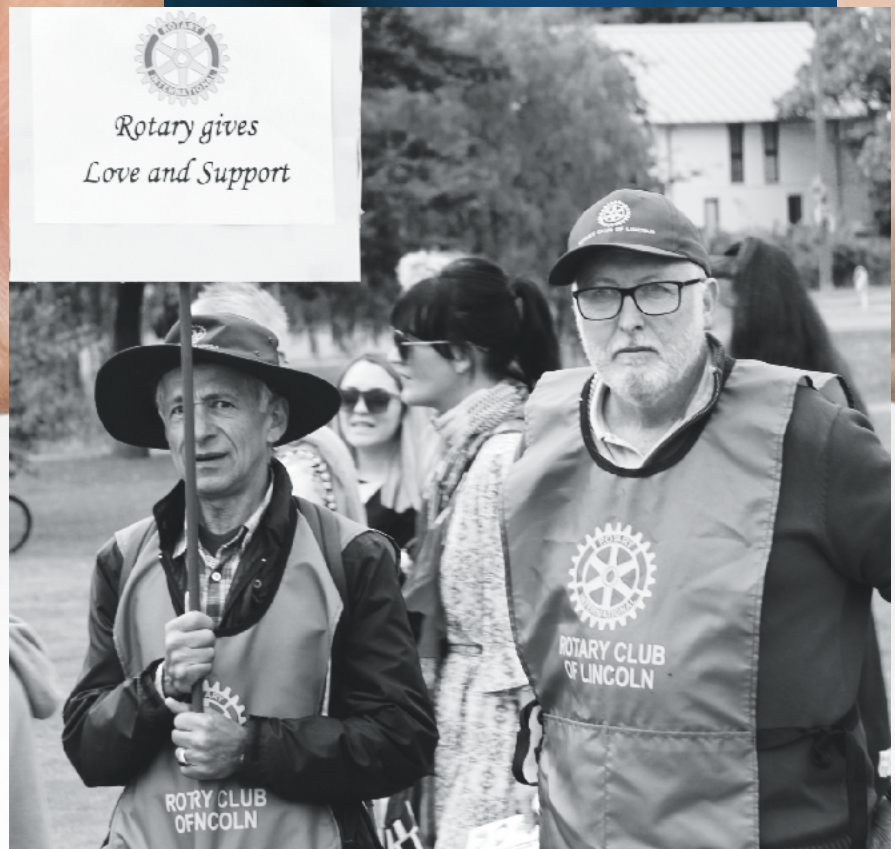
PEOPLE and communities often come together as a result of natural or manmade disasters. The experience with the Christchurch mosque tragedy was no different.

Led by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, the community of Christchurch, as elsewhere in New Zealand, came together like never before, offering help and support in many different ways. A variety of public events were organised to show the solidarity within the community.

One such event was the Christchurch March For Love, organised by three young and energetic Year 12 students. Rotarians from several different clubs in Christchurch participated, marching together under the Rotary banner.



ABOVE: Isaac Cotter and Choir lead prayer and hymns for Christchurch. (Photo: Andrew Campbell)
RIGHT: Members of the Rotary Club of Lincoln, NZ, participated in the March For Love event organised by three Year 12 students.



Members of several Christchurch Rotary clubs showed their support by participating in the March for Love event, held on Saturday, March 23.



To Christchurch and its People

*By Shirish's daughter, Neha
Originally published in North Christchurch
newspaper Nor'West News*

*Too many innocent lives lost,
Too many prayers left unanswered,
Too many people hurt,
Too many dreams shattered.*

*Too much hate in the world,
Just too much anger.
How did it come to this?
Is all of the world now in danger?*

*The people of Christchurch, we like our red
and black;
But not the red that comes with blood stains,
Not the black that accompanies a terror
attack.*

*Christchurch will be back up though,
Once again rising from the ashes.
Once again, our people will find that smile,
After we've wiped tears off each other's
eyelashes.*

*Christchurch is my home, as it is yours,
I hope you all feel safe again, albeit with
horrific scars.
I wish for this paradise to be beautiful again,
I hope you see your prayers weren't in vain.*

***“Christchurch
will be back up
though,
Once again
rising from the
ashes.
Once again, our
people will find
that smile,
After we've
wiped tears off
each other's
eyelashes.*”**

Rotary Mosque Appeal

By Shane Murdoch
President, Rotary Club of Riccarton, NZ

WE would like to thank Rotarians within New Zealand, across the Tasman, and around the world for your response to the call for support after the shootings in Christchurch. The Rotary Mosque Appeal, managed by the Rotary Club of Riccarton, has swelled with donations to assist victims, their families and the community recover from this tragic incident.

It quickly became clear that support would be required in two key stages. First, via responding to immediate needs, and second, through establishing a fund to be drawn from to provide continued, longer-term support.

Over the past couple of weeks, Rotarians have been volunteering at the Support Centre and Hub, set up at Hagley Park by the Christchurch City Council and local Muslim leadership to provide a place for victims and affected families to seek support and access instantaneous help. There, we have seen firsthand how absolute and devastating the trauma associated with this event has been – the stories will stay with us for a long time to come.

We have been able to get to know key people and undertake a degree of diligence with regards to

the level and types of need. As an example, Rotarians from District 9970 responded to an urgent call to provide groceries for food and care packages to the tune of \$1600. The centre ran out of food after a sudden influx of families seeking help after the national memorial service – the first time many had ventured out of their houses since the shootings.

Stage One of this appeal has been effectively closed off at \$50,000, which is being handed over to the Canterbury Muslim Community Trust to coordinate for direct support to victims and families. Over \$25,000 in



grocery, petrol and taxi vouchers and a further \$25,000 in cash has been handed over to the Trust, which will use the money to provide counselling and psychological support in a culturally appropriate way.

Significant funds remain, in addition to clubs that have pledged or expressed interest in contributing to a legacy fund. Discussions are underway towards establishing a trust, with a grants committee comprised of Rotarians and representatives from the Muslim community. The scope is still being finalised, but will include supporting young people with parents killed in the attacks.

These terror attacks have had a devastating effect on the Muslim community and New Zealand as a whole. We know from our experience with the Christchurch earthquakes, after the initial shock and trauma, the real psychological impacts and long-term consequences are still to come. Rotary will continue to offer whatever support we can, doing our best to alleviate suffering and pave the way towards a peaceful future for all.

For those individuals and clubs that would now like to contribute, we ask that you make your donation now.

The details are:

- Bank: 03
- Branch: 0823
- Account: 0350538
- Suffix: 00

For donations from outside New Zealand, the bank is "Westpac" and the branch is "Riccarton".

The bank's address is 129 Riccarton Road, Riccarton, Christchurch 8041, New Zealand. Swift Code is WPACNZ2W. The account name is "Rotary Club of Riccarton". The Westpac Bank does not use an IBAN number.

Thank you so much to all our fellow Rotarians around the world for your support.

Cathy Gillespie, of the Rotary Club of Christchurch New Horizons, left, and Bob Parks, of the Rotary Club of Riccarton, help with grocery collection for the Rotary Club of Riccarton's Mosque Appeal.

They Are Us

**By Juris Jakovics
Rotary Club of Canberra
Burley Griffin, ACT**

ON the Tuesday following the Christchurch attacks, Rotarians, along with some 3000 people, attended a vigil at the Canberra Rotary Peace Bell in Nara Park to express our sorrow and show our solidarity with people all around the world, especially the Islamic communities in mourning. We stand for harmony,

inclusiveness, compassion, mateship, and multiculturalism.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has shown the kind of compassion all people deserve, from all quarters. Referring to the tragedy, she has stated emphatically on behalf of all New Zealanders: "This is not us".

Her words were echoed in the statement read by all in attendance at the vigil in Nara Park, prepared in Canberra, ACT, by students from the Australian National University New

Zealand Club, New Zealand High Commission and the ACT Government:

Our values provide a guiding light in our darkest hours.

We stand together in representing diversity and inclusion. They are us.

We stand together in kindness and compassion. They are us.

We stand with those who have been impacted by the attack in Christchurch. They are us.

We offer our thoughts and prayers.

Our values will not and cannot be shaken by the attack in Christchurch.

The attack in Christchurch is not who we are.

We reject and condemn the hatred and extremism behind the attack. It has no place in our communities.

Our communities will always welcome people who value peace and tolerance.

Our commitment to these values will always hold true.

They are us.

Ali Bulbul and Saba Awan ring the Canberra Rotary Peace Bell 50 times during the ACT's Christchurch Vigil.





Peacebuilding committee chair David Hirsch, left, Fatima Ali, of the Rotary Club of Sydney, former Ethnic Community Liaison Officer with the NSW Police Munzer Emad, Together for Humanity representative and acting chair of Muslim Aid Australia Madenia Abdurahman, and Together for Humanity founder Rabbi Zalman Kastel at the Rotary Club of Sydney's peacebuilding forum.

What is to be done?

IN response to the tragic Christchurch shooting, the Rotary Club of Sydney's Peacebuilding Group organised a special forum on the problems of radicalisation and extremism titled "The Problem of Radicalisation: What is to be done?"

The event was an opportunity to explore the many facets of a growing problem within communities across the globe, and to consider ways in which steps might be taken to prevent radicalisation and its tragic consequences into the future.

Guest panellists included founder of interfaith and intercultural educational organisation Together for Humanity, Rabbi Zalman Kastel, and fellow representative Madenia Abdurahman, who is also acting chair of Muslim Aid Australia.

Zalman emphasised the importance of education and fostering critical thinking skills in preventing extremism and radicalisation.

"Research has been done on some of the educational pathways preventing radicalisation and violent extremism," Zalman said. "A summary of research by Gauche and a few others commissioned by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation found that when education is open and encourages

critical thinking and forming relationships outside your ethnic or faith group – that kind of very open pedagogy – prevents extremism. What doesn't prevent extremism is educating people for a job or telling people what to think, because nobody internalises that."

Madenia reflected on her experiences in apartheid South Africa and encounters during her teaching career with Sydney youth who became radicalised.

"Some of them become radicalised because there is no sense of belonging. When a number of them went to Lebanon their holidays were cut short – they were outcasts in their communities, because they were not Lebanese anymore, they were Australian; but coming back here they were not 'Australian'," Madenia said. "So, these kids were in a vacuum. Some became radicalised – because there was no place for them in society."

The Rotary Club of Sydney's Fatima Ali brought her academic expertise in radicalisation and conflict resolution to the table.

"When you look why this happens in our Western democratic societies, there are compounding effects of many factors. Some of it is about

perceived injustices – not necessarily to the individual themselves, but the injustices they perceive in the world, for example, 'What is happening in the world around me? What is happening in the world of my ethnic origin?'

"For Islamic fundamentalists and white extremists, it can be about existential fear. You yourself can be well-off, but because you identify with the race you come from, or the religion you come from, there is fear. They have in common a fear that the end is coming. There is an existential threat to themselves. 'I might be well-off, but I fear that my white group is going to end because of the impact of Islam invading and so on.'"

Also taking part was Munzer Emad, former Ethnic Community Liaison Officer with the NSW Police, who described the Christchurch shootings as an attack on the fabric of Western society, designed to polarise the community.

"The attack was about trying to shift average people towards the White Supremacists or Muslim extremists, with both of these extreme minorities feeding off one another to justify their aims.

"We are the silent majority of the community and have to take a stand."

Peacebuilding committee chair David Hirsch said peacebuilding is a core objective of Rotary, with education playing a vital role in fostering peaceful communities.

"Sharing ideas, absorbing others' expertise and critically thinking about our world at events like this forum are important steps towards that end."