



Have you considered a satellite club?



PICTURED: Fiona Smith, of the Pakuranga Tamaki River Rotary Auxiliary, NZ, takes her hat off to Elm Park Primary School Principal Trish Plowright as she makes gardening fun.

Aimed at introducing Rotary to those who would not otherwise join, the concept of satellite clubs was developed to provide an alternative approach to forming clubs. Since the launch of the concept in 2013, satellites are now proving a powerful tool for membership development.

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WHEN Rotary International brought in the concept of satellite clubs, I was appointed the extension chair and, despite speaking at Presidents Elect Training Seminar and District Assemblies, I was most frustrated at the closed minds of Rotarians, coming up with all kinds of reasons as to why we should not even think about it. I then started travelling around the district to attend assistant governor meetings and eventually offered

myself as a club guest speaker. This became a yearly education routine with the new presidents each year.

Since then, membership in District 9640 has grown, with seven successful satellite clubs formed, two of which have now chartered as full Rotary clubs.

But one must have the passion and drive to make this happen; I assure you that it will not become a reality otherwise.

Clubs that have embraced the concept are the winners, with the satellite club's numbers added to its membership base. Not only are there extra hands to help with projects,

fundraising and barbecues, these new members can breathe life back into a club with diminishing membership.

Satellite clubs can meet anywhere, at any time, on any day, as long as it's not at the same time as the sponsor club. I have found the most successful formula is to have the sponsor club as a dinner club and the satellite club as a breakfast club, or vice versa.

This way, prospective members can choose between both and members are not lost because of time constraints.

Clubs with 'senior' members should seriously consider sponsoring a satellite club, remembering to look at the big picture for the future and understand that the satellite club can give them continuity.

I have a motto: "Think outside the square and be flexible", because there is no reason why every club should not consider sponsoring a satellite club.



PICTURED: Rotary Satellite Club of Tenterfield – The Granite Belt members Angelo Puglisi, left, and Don Gaske load pods of water onto trucks ready to be delivered as part of the district's Water for the West and Fires project.

Rotary Satellite Club of Tenterfield bringing water to the west

Queensland's Granite Belt region is experiencing the worst drought in living memory, with the local water supply expected to be completely depleted by the end of the year. The district has not had beneficial rain since March 2017 and conditions only worsened following the devastating fires in September.

Rotary has jumped on board to offer support through its Water for the West and Fires initiative, and the Rotary Satellite Club of Tenterfield – The Granite Belt has literally been on the ground running daily, decked out in their Hi-Vis Rotary vests, delivering precious donated water to people experiencing desperate circumstances.

The Water for the West and Fires project was initiated by Rotary clubs on the Gold Coast and friends of Rotary in Southeast Queensland. Support has come from 13 Rotary clubs and 18 other groups, community members and business organisations, who have given generous donations of water and cash. Local companies Granite Belt Fruit Freighters, Ballandean Estate and Mario Marino have provided storage facilities and the use of equipment such as forklifts for loading and unloading pods of water.

To date, nearly 300,000 litres of good drinking water has been delivered to more than 200 schools and families.

The project will continue for as long as drought conditions continue and, more importantly, for as long as people are in need help. The Rotary Satellite Club of Tenterfield – The Granite Belt will be all hands on deck all the way.

How's that satellite going?

IN June 2018, 15 people were inducted into the Pakuranga Tamaki River Rotary Auxiliary, a satellite club of the Rotary Club of Pakuranga, NZ – 15 fresh, diverse and keen new members, who began their Rotary journey in an entirely different way to traditional clubs.

Gone were guest speakers, sergeant sessions, meals, banners and paper communication. In were planning meetings, working bees and assisting other clubs, while learning about our amazing organisation.

Eighteen months on, the Pakuranga Tamaki River Rotary Auxiliary has completed eight projects, including transforming a derelict school dental clinic into a stunning, welcoming family meeting room and creating a sweet-smelling memory garden at Elm Park Primary School, as well as supporting three other clubs with large projects. Five members were seconded to act as Sergeants at the South Pacific Presidents Elect Training Seminar in March – a great opportunity to experience Rotary's big picture.

During this time, three new members joined the group.



Most recently, young mum Penelope organised an ongoing community support system to knit beautiful clothing and blankets for needy newborn babies. These are distributed through the local Plunket nurse.

A pleasing 83 per cent of the now 18 members are female, in stark contrast with the host club's female count of just nine per cent. Ranging in age from 19 to 70, 11 different ethnicities are represented in the group, and all but two members are still in fulltime employment.

"We are fortunate to have such diverse folk as members," said Sylvie Wilkinson, of the Rotary Club of Pakuranga, who was the visionary behind the formation of the satellite club. "This strong, dynamic group is very capable of completing meaningful service in our area. Rotary must nurture and support them."

So, what has the club learnt over



PICTURED: Pakuranga Tamaki River Rotary Auxiliary members Crystal Leung and Rachel Wong take a break during work on the Elm Park Primary School Memory Garden.

the past year and a half and, if they were to do it all over again, what would they do differently?

Very little according to Sylvie, who says the bottom-up approach has worked well.

She does, however, believe it is necessary for the host club to continue

its strong, hands-on nurturing of the satellite for as long as needed.

"They are keen, delightful people wanting to support their community. With our support, they will continue to provide meaningful service, in line with the *Four Way Test* and *The Objects of Rotary*."

Parmas for Polio

NEWGEN is a satellite club of the Rotary Club of Nunawading, Vic, designed for young professionals aged 25-40 in Melbourne's outer east.

As a group of only five members with busy lives, the club focuses first and foremost on supporting Rotary and the district's biggest causes and events. Naturally, polio comes to mind, especially the multiplying effects of donating to the cause. Throw in the love of a great Aussie pub meal – and Parmas For Polio was born.

"Initially, we thought we could pull off this event in a small function room of 50 and make a small but cheerful contribution," NewGen president Kiel Egging said. "But we decided to back ourselves and aim high."

And the end result?

"More than 100 people joined us at The Coach in Ringwood on October 3 for a parma, a keynote address from past Rotary International President Ian Riseley, and some very happy raffle winners took home prizes donated by local businesses.

"To top it off, District 9810 offered up a matching US\$1000 contribution to the first 10 clubs that donate this financial year – and just enough money was raised on the night (with 24 cents left over) to qualify. Throw in a matching

contribution from Rotary's World Polio Fund, and a 2-for-1 contribution from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the club's \$1480 was transformed into a \$13,320 (US\$9000) donation.

"It's pretty amazing to have provided more than 5000 children with a polio vaccination just by getting together for a parma and pot," Kiel said. "It's also been great to show what a small group of passionate young Rotarians from a new demographic can do if they stay focused, put the time in to spread the word and aim high." •



PICTURED: NewGen Rotary members with past Rotary International president Ian Riseley and District 9810 governor Shia Smart's son, Flynn, at the club's Parmas For Polio event. (Photo: Balazs Mariczky)