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IN SIGHT

Peace Symposium

to celebrate our centenary

February is Peace and Conflict Resolution month in the Rotary world. Can we contribute towards building a more peaceful world over the next 100 years?

With our Australasian centenary looming, it is timely to reflect on the dividends of our efforts in peacebuilding and to examine potential ways to create more positive impact over the next 100 years.

Many events are planned to celebrate our centenary, one of which is a Peace Symposium, to be held in Melbourne, April 21-22, 2021.

Titled 'The Future of Peace Leadership', the symposium will run over a day and a half at Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre.

"Thus far, we have a commitment from Nobel Peace Prize winner Associate Professor Tilman Ruff, founding chair of ICAN, who, along with colleagues, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 for their work on nuclear disarmament, perhaps the most important challenge of the 21st century," said organising committee chair Professor Robert Helme.

"Conversations are continuing with other leading thinkers taking a global perspective to ensure we address the most challenging issues in the world today."

Six 90-minute sessions are planned, with registrants able to select the three they most wish to attend.

Tentative session titles include 'Management of Family Violence', focusing on the role of police and other responders in cases of family violence, based on experiences in Melbourne over the past decade arising from the Royal Commission report into family violence.

Other sessions will address the growing interest of business in human rights law; provide an Australian context to humanitarian aid programs developed, in part, by past Peace Fellows at RedR, located in Parkville, Melbourne, an aid organisation contracted by government, particularly DFAT, to provide short-term assistance to countries in our region who have experienced natural disasters.

Another session will address the topic 'Indigenous reconciliation matters' by focussing on ideas being generated and discussed by an evolving younger generation of Indigenous leaders.

Lastly, a workshop session directed specifically at Rotarians will be facilitated by experienced Peace Fellows asking how one might choose the 'right' peacebuilding project.

Will this symposium have useful outcomes? You will need to make that judgement by attending, digesting and promulgating your considered opinions on the topics raised above and any others you would like to present by poster; posters will be accepted after abstract review by the organising committee.

The final plenary session of the symposium will be a facilitated discussion by all delegates on how we might better network Rotarians, Peace Fellows and the community to implement ideas and plans for a more peaceful world.

If you wish to contribute to the symposium email Professor Helme via office@rotaryclubofmelbourne.org.au.

"I would especially like to hear from anyone with appropriate expertise and experience who would be prepared to guide logistic, publicity and sponsorship activities," Professor Helme said. "Please diarise the dates and encourage fellow Rotarians to contribute to the poster sessions, where you are guaranteed to meet and create a momentum for change with other like-minded people." •

THE YOUNGSTERS ARE NOW IN THEIR 80S!

Rotaract is often described as being like Rotary, but with better parties.

Formally founded on March 13, 1968, the origins of Rotaract start much earlier. As early as 1935, Paul Harris encountered a youth organisation based on Rotary principles in Australia. In the 1950s, many youth clubs were sponsored by Rotary clubs under various names. These included the 'Paul Harris Circles' in Europe and the 'Rotors' clubs created in some American Universities. In 1965, these organisations experienced significant growth, in part due to the Interact program created by Rotary International in 1962.

Many Interactors, having reached the age limit of that program, were starting new types of clubs called 'Senior Interact'. The new program's name, Rotaract, was created by Rotary International as a combination of the words 'Rotary' and 'Action'.

The aim of the program was stated to be "to develop leadership and responsible citizenship through service to the community". Many existing Rotary-based youth clubs changed their names to become an official Rotaract club.

In the 1990s, Rotaractors combined their organisations on an international level with the creation of multi-district organisations in Europe, Australia and South America. There are over 7000 clubs in about 163 countries and geographical areas. Internationally, Rotaract is strong in Asia, Africa and South America, as well as Europe, where Rotary membership may be exclusive or expensive.

And for our centenary, the party is just beginning!

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THE WORLD
NEEDS MORE
#ROTARACTORS