

CASTERTON
Rotary
Club



ANNUAL REPORT



2025

The Rotary Club of Casterton Inc

A0010646W

District 9780 : Club 18220

ABN 75295289482

Presented at Change-over Dinner held at
Element Café & Larder Marquee, Henty Street, Casterton
on Thursday 26th June, 2025

PAST PRESIDENTS 1947/48 – 2024/25

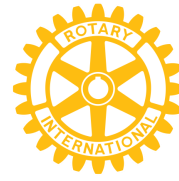
1947/48	Charles Anderson	1986/87	Bryan Denton
1948/49	Stan Stooke	1987/88	Doug Coulter
1949/50	Alan Millikan	1988/89	Robbie Greene
1950/51	Hugh Cushing	1989/90	Cliff Tischler
1951/52	Bill Peden	1990/91	Ron Dear
1952/53	Murray McAllister	1991/92	Adrian Bunnik
1953/54	John Hughes	1992/93	Jack Dowling
1954/55	Bill Mierisch	1993/94	Brian McCabe
1955/56	Charles Anderson	1994/95	John Blackmore
1956/57	Arthur Goode	1995/96	Graham Coventry
1957/58	Bob Doyle	1996/97	Robin McKernan
1958/59	Fin Miller	1997/98	Robert Bunge
1959/60	Clarrie Kempton	1998/99	Denis McNamara
1960/61	Oliver Cameron	1999/00	Des Murphy
1961/62	Tom Howlett	2000/01	Robert Slorach
1962/63	Lou Hayward	2001/02	Basil Stafford
1963/64	Aub Baxter	2002/03	Michael McNamara
1964/65	Val Sloss	2003/04	Kevin Kelso
1965/66	Bob Fell	2004/05	Graham Coventry
1966/67	Alan Ehms	2005/06	Doug Coulter
1967/68	Arch Green	2006/07	Sophia Holm
1968/69	Lou Barberis	2007/08	Andrew Dowling
1969/70	Ivan Fell	2008/09	Greg Coulter
1970/71	Phil Prentice	2009/10	Kaye Annett
1972/72	Mark Kerr	2010/11	Steve Faroe
1972/73	Peter Betros	2011/12	Don Kilsby
1973/74	Bill Franks	2012/13	Wally Walsh
1974/75	Tony Floyd	2013/14	Sue Kilsby
1975/76	Jack Dowling	2014/15	Lynne Nadebaum
1976/77	Tom Chambers	2015/16	Darren Brown
1977/78	Robbie Greene	2016/17	Roger Dalby
1978/79	Ray Carn	2017/18	Shane Gill
1979/80	George Vickery	2018/19	Darren Brown
1980/81	Bill Mitchell	2019/20	Sheryl-Lee Connolly
1981/82	David Ferrier	2020/21	Peter Broomhead
1982/83	Jack Dowling	2021/22	Wally Walsh
1983/84	Drew Buckle	2022/23	Christine Munro
1984/85	Allen Dowling	2023/24	Sheryl-Lee Brown
1985/86	Ted Walsgott	2024/25	Tonie Thiel

CHARTER MEMBERSHIP July, 1947

C.A.ANDERSON	Charlie	President	Agricultural Implement Retailer
R.J.BAXTER	Ralph		Confectionery Retailing
J.R.BRYAN	Jim		Women's Clothing Retailer
H.CUSHING	Hugh		Grocery Retailing
J.E.GWYNNE	Eric	Treasurer	Banking Commercial
C.R.McE.HILL	Cyril		Civil Engineering
C.H.JEFFREYS	Claude	Secretary	Cordial Manufacturing
C.R.KNIGHT	Ray		Jewellery Retailing
J.B.MABBITT	Jim		Public Accounting Service
W.R.MIERISCH	Bill		Men's Clothing Retailing
A.H.MILLIKAN	Alan		Physician and Surgeon
A.L.MURRELL	Bro		Meat retailing
M.McALLISTER	Murray	Sgt/Arms	Automobile Retailing
J.M.NEWTON	John		Dentistry
W.S.PEDEN	Bill		Building Supplies Retail
P.Q.PINNELL	Percy		Stock and Station Agency
F.J.H.ROWAN	Hammy		General Law Practice
S.STOOKE	Stan	Vice President	General Merchandise Retail

SPONSORED BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF HAMILTON

President Tonie Thiel, PHF



of
**The Rotary Club
of
Casterton**

**Welcomes Members & Guests
to**



78th Changeover Dinner

Celebrating & commemorating her year as President 2024/25



Induction of
Rotarian PP Peter Broomhead, PHF



as President for 2025/6

Members of Casterton Rotary Club 2024-2025

Name of Member			Classification	Joined
ANNETT PP, PHF	Kaye		Education - Administration	2005
BROOMHEAD PP, PHF PP (Craigeburn)	Peter		Computer Technician	2018
BROWN PP, PHF PP (Ararat)	Darren		Police Services	2013
BROWN PP, PHF President Elect	Sheryl-Lee		Paramedic Services	2013
GILL PP	Shane		Nursing	2009
GORMAN PHF (Sapphire)	Peter		Real Estate	1986
GREENE PHF	Jean		Honorary	2016
HENKEL	Belinda		Medical Midwifery	2024
• KILSBY PP, PHF	Donald		Farming – Beef & Fat Lambs • No longer member	2006 To Apr 25
• KILSBY PP, PHF	Sue		Education – Primary • No longer member	2011 To Apr 25

Members of Casterton Rotary Club 2024-2025 - continued

Name of Member			Classification	Joined
McCORMICK PHF x2 PP Ararat, PP Hastings	Ron		Label Printer	2020
MUNRO President	Chris		Rural Supplies - Retail	2013
NEWMAN	Katrina		Gold & Silversmith	2023
SEABROOK	Andrew		Business Consultancy Services	2021
THIEL PHF	Tonie		Corporate Training	2018
TOMA Treasurer	Barb		Finance & HR Admin	2019
WALSH	Charlie		Youth Travel	2012
WALSH PP, PHF (Sapphire)	Wally		Banking – Corporate	2009

The Paul Harris Fellows Honour Board



1980	Sam Fitzpatrick <i>(shared with Hamilton & Hamilton North clubs)</i>
1987	John Hughes (Sapphire added in 2008)
1988	Robbie Greene (Sapphires added in 2011 & 2013)
1989	Fin Miller Jack Dowling
1991	Doug Coulter (Sapphire added in 2014)
1993	Ron Dear Alan Dowling
1997	Adrian Bunnik (Sapphire added in 2009)
1999	John Blackmore
2005	Ted Walsgott Des Murphy Graeme Coventry
2006	Michael McNamara
2007	Dick Escott
2008	John Hughes (Sapphire)
2009	Adrian Bunnik (Sapphire)
2010	Jean Greene
2011	Kaye Annett Robbie Greene (Sapphire)
2014	Doug Coulter (Sapphire) Peter Gorman (Sapphire added in 2021)
2017	Don Kilsby Sue Kilsby
2018	Wally Walsh (Sapphire added in 2022)
2019	Roger Dalby Darren Brown
2021	Peter Gorman (Sapphire)
2022	Tonie Thiel (Sapphire added in 2025) Sheryl-Lee Brown Wally Walsh (Sapphire)

2024-2025

World President – Stephanie A. Urchick
Rotary Club of McMurray, Pennsylvania, USA

District Governor (District 9780) – Lesley Shedden
Rotary Club of Torquay

Casterton Rotary Club **Club Roles 2024/25**

President	:	Tonie Thiel
Vice President	:	PP Sheryl-Lee Brown
President Elect	:	Peter Broomhead
President Nominee	:	Belinda Henkel
Secretary	:	Kaye Annett
<u>Admin Team</u>	:	• Admin & Correspondence – Kaye Annett • Minute Secretary – Wally Walsh • Public Officer, Risk & Compliance – Barb Toma • IT & Systems Support – Andrew Seabrook
Treasurer	:	Barb Toma
Rotary Foundation	:	Wally Walsh
Membership	:	Peter Gorman
<u>Member Support Team</u>	:	• Club Learning Facilitator – Tonie Thiel • Sergeant at Arms – Shane Gill • Corporal – Peter Broomhead
International Service	:	Belinda Henkel
Members	:	• Don Kilsby • Sue Kilsby
Community Service	:	Chris Munro
<u>Community Support Team</u>	:	• Advisor Events Catering – Jean Greene • Member – Ron McCormick
Public Image	:	Andrew Seabrook
Environment Portfolio	:	Katrina Newman
Youth Programs Portfolio	:	Charlie Walsh
Vocational Portfolio	:	Darren Brown

- ❖ **Board for Governance Meetings (6/7)**
- ❖ **Full Board for Club Leadership Meetings (6/7+6)**
- ❖ **Committee, Team & Support Roles (All)**

Focus Groups/Working Teams formed with a Convenor as required
(eg. Art Show and M.A.G.I.C-*Music Art Gardens in Casterton*)

2025-2026

World President – Francesco Arezzo

Rotary Club of Ragusa, Italy

District Governor (District 9780) – Christine Dufty

Rotary Club of Nhill

Casterton Rotary Club

Board 2025/26

President	:	Peter Broomhead
Immediate Past President	:	Tonie Thiel
President Elect 2026/27	:	Belinda Henkel
President Nominee 2027/28	:	TBA
Secretary	:	Sheryl-Lee Brown
Treasurer	:	Chris Munro
Foundation	:	Darren Brown
Membership	:	Peter Gorman
Youth Programs	:	Charlie Walsh
Public Relations	:	Wally Walsh

Other Club Roles

Sergeant at Arms	:	Shane Gill
Corporal	:	Ron McCormick
Bulletin ("The Dot") Editor	:	Wally Walsh
Property Monitor	}	Jean Greene
Property Maintenance		Peter Broomhead
Events Catering Advisor	:	Jean Greene
IT Support	:	Andrew Seabrook
Historian	:	Wally Walsh
	:	
"Chooklotto" Management	:	Chris Munro
"The Little Pantry" Monitor	:	Ron McCormick

Committee Membership

ALL Members will support the Board, and other Role leaders.
Focus Groups/Working Teams will be formed with a Convenor
appointed as required - *(eg. Art Show and M.A.G.I.C-Music
Art Gardens in Casterton events)*

From the President's Desk : 2024/25

This was a year to discover — and rediscover — *The Magic of Rotary*.

What a year it's been. Together, our small but mighty club demonstrated the true meaning of Rotary: service above self, community care, and strength in adversity.

Throughout the year, our members worked wonders — bringing people together, responding to crisis, supporting youth, celebrating art, raising funds, sharing laughter, and most of all, strengthening Casterton. That's the real magic — not sleight of hand, but service, friendship, and purpose.

I must begin this report with heartfelt thanks to our entire Club membership for your kindness, support and hard work throughout 2024–25. Four months into the year, we were met with a significant and unwelcome surprise. I'm incredibly proud of how you all responded — with dignity, determination, and a deep sense of community. Together we showed that, when needed, the people of Casterton are more than capable of looking after our town with minimal external support. You should all feel very proud of our little Club.

Sometimes we forget just how much we have done together. Never underestimate the difference that you make ... please read on!

Yours in Rotary



Tonie Thiel
President 2024 – 25
Rotary Club of Casterton

The Storm That Changed Our Year

A devastating hailstorm hit Casterton in October, but our Rotary Club stepped up — from community BBQs to helping bring the Insurance Council of Australia to town.

At 5:45pm on 16 October 2024, a violent storm rolled through Casterton, unleashing massive hail that left homes, businesses, and vehicles severely damaged. The event caused millions of dollars in destruction, left almost every roof in town compromised, and upended daily life. Even now, eight months on, I write this with the sound of roof repairs overhead — on a house re-roofed just ten months before the storm.

Despite this, no official disaster declaration was ever made. No public appeals, no coordinated response. Casterton was largely left to fend for itself — and our town rose to the challenge.

Our club quickly saw the need for connection, conversation, and community support. So we did what Rotarians do best: we fired up the BBQ. What began as a simple idea — a free sausage sizzle to bring people together — grew into a pivotal moment for the community.

We invited other service clubs, the newly returned Mayor, Karen Stephens and politicians to join. Only The Hon Dan Tehan MP and Mayor Karen accepted, but that was enough. With no speeches planned, people stayed well beyond the advertised end time. Stories were shared. Frustrations were aired. And something remarkable happened.

Dan Tehan listened. He took those stories back to Canberra and began advocating fiercely for Casterton residents struggling with insurance claims. His work brought the Insurance Council of Australia to town — not once, but twice — setting up “pop-up” offices in the Town Hall so locals could meet face-to-face with insurance representatives. Many residents left those meetings with real progress and real hope.

Rotary had played a central role in this — from collaborating with Lions and the Community Centre team with the sausage sizzle that started it all, to building relationships with the ICA and helping coordinate services from legal aid, financial counselling, and wellbeing organisations.

Media Voice:

Our advocacy and community work earned us a welcome place on local radio, with interviews conducted by ACE Radio and regular updates on the recovery of the town invited by ABC Statewide Drive program — helping position our Club as a trusted source of rural news and community leadership.

Rotary’s impact began with compassion and ended in systemic change.

Sometimes, it really does start with a sausage.

(Areas of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention, Community Economic Development)



Club Meetings & Operations

We aimed for efficient, enjoyable meetings — with less waffle, more purpose, and greater connection.

At our very first meeting of the year, we surveyed members to find out what they wanted from our time together. The top responses were clear:

1. Less waffle
2. Start and finish on time
3. More fun, social connection, and variety

We responded by refining our meeting format and sticking (mostly) to the structure. Guest speakers, themed nights, and collaborative events with other community organisations helped keep our gatherings lively, engaging, and purposeful.

2025 Meeting Cadence

Week 1 – Projects in Focus

Week 2 – Business Meeting

Week 3 – Embracing our Community

Week 4 – Conversations and Curiosities

Week 5 – Wild Card

Unfortunately, the October storm displaced us from our usual venue at the Albion Hotel, which remains closed for repairs. Our hearts go out to Julie Phillips, Geoff and Jason who have been so generous to us and are still navigating the road back to recovery.

A move to the Old Courthouse Community Centre provided a temporary home until that too was ruled out after the discovery of asbestos during their own repairs and refurbishment. We've since been welcomed at the Glenelg Inn —a temporary home base in challenging circumstances. Thanks to their staff for accommodating us during a busy recovery period for the whole town.

And despite all the challenges we largely maintained the new meeting format, building in fun, collaboration and variety throughout the Rotary year.

Community Projects & Local Impact

From food relief and town beautification to heritage advocacy and local recognition, we stayed deeply connected to Casterton's needs.

Despite the many disruptions of the year, our club maintained an active and visible presence across a range of community-focused initiatives. Many of these efforts were long-standing commitments — others were opportunities that emerged in response to local need or re-engagement with past proposals.

- **The Little Free Pantry (Murray St):**

Ron McCormick continued to quietly ensure that this small but mighty pantry remained stocked and ready to support community members in need. His behind-the-scenes efforts keep this offering alive and relevant. Thank you, Ron.

- **Additional Food Pantry (Clarke St):**

Located near the Old Courthouse Community Centre, this second pantry expanded access. Members were invited to bring pantry items to club meetings, with Ron and Peter Broomhead coordinating deliveries and stock rotation at both sites.

- **Community Service Award – Shane Kelly:**

We recognised our long serving and recently retired Senior Constable Shane Kelly for his career contribution to the safety and protection of Casterton. A small but heartfelt gesture marking the conclusion of a commitment to country policing.

- **Walk Against Family Violence (6 Dec):**

Club members joined a small and committed group of locals for this CMH-sponsored walk, finishing with a presentation at Hey Jude Café. It was an understated act of solidarity raising community awareness of the challenges, services and supports available to those at risk of family violence.

(Area of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention)

- **Say No to Family Violence Campaign Support:**

Looking ahead, we'll be supporting an upcoming Australian Rules Football round dedicated to saying "No to Family Violence", arranged by Kane Forbes — who heads up Youth HQ and is actively involved in the Casterton Sandford Football and Netball Club. This event will provide a unique opportunity for Rotary to collaborate with Hands Up Casterton and the Football Club, with the possibility of reaching the many young people in our town who are engaged in local sport as players, coaches or leaders.

(Area of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention)

- **Railway Station Rescue – Back on Track:**

While our original proposal to activate the Casterton Railway Station had gone unanswered in 2021, a more recent meeting — initiated via the Casterton & District Historical Society — brought new hope. President Tonie, Secretary Kaye, Belinda and Wally met with VicTrack and Glenelg Shire representatives at the Kelpie Centre to explore future community use of the site. A new sublease model is now in development, with refurbishment expected to begin July 2025 and completion by September. The challenge will be to identify ways to make the venue pay its way, with an emphasis on bringing additional tourism and benefits to Casterton. *(Area of Focus: Community Economic Development)*

- **Casterton–Branxholme Rail Trail:**

In 2019 a feasibility study was produced following interest by a number of local residents and businesses. Since then, focus had waned however recently interest in reactivating this proposal has resurfaced, enthusiasm has been rekindled and while still in the early discussion stages, the revitalisation of the Station could also mark a new beginning for a Rail Trail. We'll continue to focus on the station project and support movement on the Rail Trail where appropriate.

- **Rotary Rest Point & Endangered Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Information Reserve:**

This year, members continued our care of Rotary Rest Point and, at the other end of town, The Endangered Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo (ERTBC) Information Bay — a roadside stop that not only welcomes visitors but promotes awareness of the threatened Cockatoo's habitat. Shane Gill and Lifang (Fong) Zhang have been heroic in their efforts to keep the ERTBC reserve surroundings well cared for and habitat plantings alive during the protracted drought. Their dedication ensures this important conservation space remains both healthy and educational for locals and visitors alike. *A more detailed update appears in the Environment section.*

- **Australia Day BBQ – 26 Jan:**

Held at the Casterton Vice Regal Band Sound Shell — this year's BBQ was, as ever, a significant and cheerful part of our town's national day celebrations.

- **Planning for Track-Master Off-Road Caravan Club Visit:**

Up to 60 caravans are expected in Casterton this coming October — with the aim of assisting town recovery and supporting local organisations. The group deliberately targets towns that have experienced economic hardship giving them a boost by spending locally and supporting small business. Our club has welcomed the opportunity to assist.

- **Meeting with Glenelg Shire CEO (Disaster Planning):**

President Tonie participated in a planning meeting to ensure local service organisations like Rotary have a seat at the table in shaping Glenelg's disaster response plans.

Through consistent service and renewed advocacy, our Club strengthened Casterton's resilience and helped keep important community issues moving forward.

(Areas of Focus: Community Economic Development, Supporting the Environment, Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention)

Youth Programs & Future Vocations

We backed young people to grow, learn, connect — and even travel the world — with support tailored to their passions and potential.

Youth development remained at the heart of our Club's mission this year. Whether through local drop-in programs, international exchange, skill-building workshops, or artistic and sporting dreams, we backed young people in practical, personal and meaningful ways.

- **Youth HQ Support:**

We renewed our financial support subsidising Youth HQ's rent, ensuring this vital drop-in space remains available for local youth. Our contribution is to be acknowledged with Rotary signage in the front window — a visible reminder of our commitment to creating safe, welcoming places for young people.

- **Donation of Ride-On Mower:**

Our superseded Rotary ride-on mower was donated to Youth HQ to be refurbished as part of a hands-on learning project. With guidance, young people will be able to gain experience in small engine repair, with the longer-term benefit of selling the mower to raise funds for their centre. This initiative enriches the Youth HQ program by blending vocational skills, entrepreneurship, and community ownership.

(Area of Focus: Community Economic Development, Basic Education and Literacy)

- **Halloween at Youth HQ:**

A collaborative evening hosted by Rotary, Youth HQ and Friends & Neighbours saw Henty Street transformed into a Halloween hub. Soup and rolls, spooky décor, and a costume competition judged by Rotarians brought in more than 100 children and parents. A joyful celebration of imagination, community, and inclusion.

(Area of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention)

- **Say No to Family Violence – Next Steps:**

Building on this year's campaign support, our Club will next partner with **Hands Up Casterton** and the **Casterton Sandford Football and Netball Club** to promote a "Say No to Family Violence" football round. Organised by Kane Forbes (head of Youth HQ), the initiative will connect Rotary messaging with one of the most influential parts of youth culture in town — local sport. *(Area of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention)*

- **Youth Sponsorship – Sarah Crowle:**

We supported Sarah, a Hamilton College student and Casterton resident, to attend the prestigious **Joffrey Ballet Music College in New York**. Sarah later returned to speak at our Club and share highlights of her five-week international experience. A remarkable young ambassador for our region. *(Area of Focus: Community Economic Development)*

- **Youth Sponsorship – Stacy Edwards:**

Stacy's determination to become a jockey captured our attention and support. In April, we sponsored her toward this dream — a fantastic example of **Chooklotto Funds** in action, backing local youth who might not otherwise be able to realise their ambitions.

(Area of Focus: Community Economic Development)

- **Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA):**

Ed Pritchard and Nick Schembri, recent RYLA participants, joined us for a barbecue by the Glenelg River and shared reflections on their growth, confidence, and connection through the program. These young leaders represent the next generation of engaged citizens — thoughtful, motivated and grounded in community and Rotary values.

(Area of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention)

- **Rotary Youth Exchange Interviews:**

Tonie, Wally and Charlie supported the D9780 Youth Exchange student/parent interviews in Ballarat, drawing on prior experience to assist with selection and preparation. This long-standing Rotary program remains one of the most powerful ways we build peace and understanding between cultures and nations.

(Area of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention)

- **Santa in Henty Street (Christmas Eve):**

Our traditional Santa visit on the steps of the Town Hall drew the usual enthusiastic crowd. A beloved ritual that helps keep the magic of Christmas alive for local children and families.

Through sponsorships, celebrations and hands-on learning, we gave young people more than funds — we gave them space, confidence, and belief.

Vocational Visits

Two insightful on-site visits arranged by Darren Brown showcased innovation and emergency preparedness in our region.

Our first visit to **Davidson Engineering**, was hosted by Rod and Nicole Davidson at their Wando Bridge property. They shared the story behind *Davo's Fencing Clip*TM—an award-winning invention conceived by Nicole and their son Jimmy and engineered by Rod. Using precision robotics, the clips are now manufactured locally from Australian-made wire. Allowing faster, stronger, and longer-lasting fencing, and this is a local success story in smart, practical design. Our second visit took us inside the **Casterton DEECA facility** where **Matt Murphy (DEECA)** and **Jeff Whitaker (CFA)** gave us a guided tour. This hub sees Environment Protection, Forest Fire Management and CFA working side-by-side daily, stands ready as an Incident Control Centre and ensures the best of teamwork and readiness for emergencies.

These visits highlighted the wealth of local expertise, innovation, and readiness that underpins the strength of our community.

(Areas of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention, Community Economic Development, Basic Education and Literacy)

Mental Health, Health & Wellbeing

We invested in awareness, preparedness, and practical support to help build a healthier, more resilient community.

Mental health and wellbeing are essential to any thriving community — especially in a year marked by disruption, recovery, and uncertainty. Our Club stepped up by hosting training, supporting outreach programs, and ensuring our own volunteers were equipped to operate safely and effectively.

- **Mental Health Guest Speaker:**

RC Portland President Peter Taylor and his wife Wendy, along with Casterton Memorial Hospital's Paula Layley-Doyle, presented on the courses and supports available to assist community members navigating mental health concerns — including suicide prevention. A valuable evening of insights and shared commitment.

- **“Safe Talk” Suicide Alertness Workshop (Heywood):**

President Tonie represented our Club at a suicide alertness training session in Heywood — a sobering but essential investment in understanding risk factors and response strategies.

- **Live4Life Mental Health First Aid Training (Casterton)**

Rotarians Belinda and Tonie successfully completed a four-week Live4Life program through Casterton Memorial Hospital (CMH), held on Mondays in March and April. The course is designed to train local adults in recognising mental health distress and supporting young people appropriately. Both are now accredited. *(Area of Focus: Disease Prevention and Treatment)*

- **Blood Donor Program Coordination:**

Thanks to Barb, Kaye and driver Shane, our regular “Blood Bank Bus” service to Mount Gambier remained steady. This quiet, recurring commitment provides a literal lifeline to those in need. *(Area of Focus: Disease Prevention and Treatment)*

- **Food Safety Training for All Members:**

This year, our entire Club undertook food safety training — a practical step to ensure we continue to meet the required standards while catering at fundraising events. While the wonderful Jean Greene has long carried the lion's share of this responsibility (and does it brilliantly), our goal was to ensure that food safety isn't left on the shoulders of just one or two members. Now, with a fully trained team, we can share the load, reduce risk, and keep catering for good. *(Area of Focus: Disease Prevention and Treatment, Community Economic Development)*

By supporting mental health, physical health and safe food practices, we strengthened our community's capacity to care — and to cook.

With care, consistency and quiet leadership, we maintained our Club's commitment to local biodiversity and awareness-raising.

Environment Director, Katrina Newman, brought thoughtful focus to this portfolio throughout the year. With her encouragement, the Club continued to protect, promote, and participate in local conservation efforts — particularly those connected to the endangered Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo and broader environmental awareness.

Rotary Rest Point & ERTBC Information Reserve:

Our conservation efforts at the Rotary Rest Point and the adjacent Endangered Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo (ERTBC) Information Bay continued, with a focus on establishing and sustaining native habitat plants. These species are critical food and shelter sources for the threatened Cockatoos. Through a long, dry season, Shane Gill and Lifang (Fong) Zhang have worked heroically to maintain this area — a space that is both environmentally important and educational for visitors. *(Area of Focus: Supporting the Environment)*

- **ERTBC Guest Speaker – Richard Hill (DEECA):**

We welcomed Richard Hill, Senior Biodiversity Officer from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, who shared his expertise on the Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo and current efforts to protect this species. This was a timely session, deepening our understanding of the significance of our reserve project and how it fits into broader biodiversity work.

- **Cockatoo Count – BirdLife Australia 2025:**

Our Club once again participated in BirdLife Australia's ERTBC Cockatoo Count, providing valuable data to support long-term conservation of the species. Citizen science at its best. The Count runs on the first Saturday each May and this is the fifth year that Club members have participated. *(Area of Focus: Supporting the Environment)*

- **Peter Francis Points Arboretum Visit:**

A joint visit with Rotary Hamilton took us to the Arboretum — a hidden gem of native plant diversity and ecological design. This outing was not only enjoyable but reaffirmed our appreciation for Australia's remarkable flora and the importance of local biodiversity protection.

- **Recycling Guest Speaker – Tony Davies (RC Warrnambool):**

Thanks to Katrina's coordination, we heard from Tony Davies about a can and bottle collection program operating successfully at major events in Warrnambool. While not taken up here (yet), it sparked ideas for how we might replicate similar initiatives in Casterton. *(Area of Focus: Supporting the Environment)*

In a year with many demands on our energy, we nevertheless continued our focus on conservation and explored new ways to tread lightly and lead locally.

Fundraising & Local Support Projects

We raised funds creatively and purposefully — with a focus on local needs, grassroots support, and real community outcomes.

This year, our Club's fundraising efforts were grounded in a simple but powerful goal: to meet local needs that often sit just outside traditional Rotary programs. Whether through sausages, art, raffles or racing, our fundraising activities supported young talent, community events, and essential services. And they often brought people together in the process.

- **Chooklotto – Local Impact with a Laugh:**

Our Chooklotto program raised a tidy sum for highly localised support requests. These are causes that might not neatly fit under Rotary's global Areas of Focus — but make a world of difference to individuals in our own backyard. This year, Chooklotto funds supported **Stacy Edwards' jockey training** and **Sarah Crowle's ballet opportunity in New York**, among other initiatives. Thanks to **Chris Munro** for her inspirational idea, exceptional coordination and ongoing enthusiasm.

(Area of Focus: Community Economic Development)

- **John Hughes Memorial Easter Raffle:**

Named in honour of late Rotarian and pharmacist John Hughes, this year's Easter raffle was a brilliant success, raising **\$2,505**. Special thanks to Kaye, Jean, and the entire team of shift workers who helped bring it to life — a meaningful way to honour John's legacy while supporting Rotary's End Polio campaign.

- **Australian Kelpie Muster Art Show:**

Despite a difficult year and many competing priorities, we once again delivered a successful Kelpie Muster Opening Ceremony and Art Show — our flagship annual event. The scope of this project is immense: artist liaison, sponsorship, curation, event promotion, sales, award coordination, and sales reconciliation. Although everyone gets involved at the 'pointy end', special thanks to Wally Walsh who begins preparing for the next event virtually the day after the previous show ends. From there the pace builds all year culminating in 'all hands on deck' during the first week in June. Congratulations to everyone involved and particular thanks to our sponsors; Casterton Kelpie Association, Vickery Bros, Gorman Real Estate and the Old Courthouse Community Centre — it's a hallmark of what we can achieve together. An honourable mention also to Roger Dalby, past Rotarian and friend, for coming back each year, marking out the Hall and laying the foundations for a smooth bump in. *(Area of Focus: Community Economic Development, Supporting the Environment)*

- **Casterton Legal Street Drags – Catering:**

Despite less-than-ideal weather (hot and windy), our catering team served up another successful fundraiser at the town's motorsport event. Thanks to Jean Greene for coordinating and to all members who contributed on the day.

(Area of Focus: Community Economic Development)

- **Sandford Bush Music Festival – Gates & Breakfast:**

A small team of members prepared and cooked breakfast for hungry volunteers and patrons — a fundraiser, yes, but also much valued support to a vibrant local cultural event that brings music, tourism and energy to our region.

- **Annual CMH Colour Run**

A request to provide healthy catering in support of the annual colour run, organised by the community engagement team at Casterton Memorial Hospital (CMH), marked the first outing of our Giant Polio Bears. Polio, now almost unheard of in Australia, persists just a plane flight away. End Polio remains a major focus for the Rotary Foundation globally. Since the 2024 Colour Run, Rotary and the CMH community engagement team have collaborated on other important wellbeing initiatives and look forward to strengthening this partnership.

- **RAWCS Raffle – Rocking Horse for RAM:**

We participated in DG Lesley Shedden’s partner project raffle to support Rotary Against Malaria (RAM), selling tickets for the handcrafted rocking horse. We didn’t win — but we supported a great cause.

- **Ballarat Car Raffle (Withdrawn):**

This annual raffle was not offered this year, but we remain open to future participation should it return.

- **United Way Shark Pitch – Support for Lions Club Vision Project:**

Rotary was an enthusiastic supporter of the **Lions Club of Merino’s** pitch to fund the purchase of children’s eyesight screening kits — making it possible to identify vision issues early, before these hinder the joy of learning. **Beyond Bank** also matched community contributions dollar-for-dollar, helping the project reach its fundraising target. A fantastic collaboration that reflects what’s possible when service clubs, local funders, and Rotary unite around a shared purpose. *(Area of Focus: Disease Prevention and Treatment, Basic Education and Literacy)*

- **Meeting with Beyond Bank:**

Following the Shark Pitch event, President Tonie met with **Grant Howland**, Community Engagement Officer for Beyond Bank, to hear more about the opening of their Portland branch to explore opportunities for further collaboration as a strong potential partner in future projects.

Our fundraising wasn’t just about revenue — it was about relevance. We backed causes our town cares about and made every dollar count. *(Area of Focus: Community Economic Development)*

International Projects & The Rotary Foundation

We played our part in Rotary's global mission — through ShelterBox, currency collection, personal connections, and continued support for The Rotary Foundation.

While our focus this year was understandably close to home, we still made meaningful contributions to Rotary's international work — reinforcing the idea that local service and global impact go hand-in-hand.

- **ShelterBox Bronze Champion Award:**

Thanks to the quiet persistence of Chris Munro, our foreign currency collection jars continued to support ShelterBox, a Rotary partner organisation delivering emergency shelter and tools to families affected by disaster around the world. This year's efforts earned our Club a Bronze Champion Award — a small jar, a big impact.

- **Barb Toma – Cambodia Connection:**

While visiting Cambodia again this year, Barb Toma explored opportunities to support education initiatives in underserved areas. Her firsthand experience and cultural insight are helping shape our understanding of where international support could be directed in the future.

- **Klibur Domin - Timor Leste**

Andrew Seabrook had hoped to return to Timor Leste during the past year, to progress the IT systems at Klibur Domin to the next stage. However, delays in internet services being extended to that country have pushed back those plans. We look forward to supporting Andrew's work when the time is right.

- **Rotary Foundation Contribution:**

Although a planned December fundraising dinner was cancelled due to storm recovery and venue availability, our Club still made a direct donation of approximately \$2,500 to The Rotary Foundation — continuing our long tradition of giving back to Rotary's global engine for good.

From coins in a jar to thoughtful travel conversations and direct financial support, we stayed connected to the global Rotary family and its powerful humanitarian reach.

(Areas of Focus: Basic Education and Literacy, Disaster Response, Community Economic Development)

Fellowship, Events & Guest Nights

Even in this toughest of years, we laughed, learned, and leaned on each other — proving again that Rotary is as much about people as it is about projects.

Amidst scaffolding, storm damage and schedule changes, our Club found ways to stay connected and joyful. From trivia nights and shared meals to community expos and guest presentations, we made room for celebration, conversation, and new connections. Fellowship was our glue — and often, our spark.

- **Wine & Cheese Night:**

A warm, relaxed evening designed to welcome guests and introduce friends to Rotary in an informal, engaging way. We also recognised the many years of support provided by the Raidis family. Patriarch Chris and wife Fran joined us for the evening, were warmly thanked and presented with our Certificate of Appreciation. It reminded us that sometimes the best recruiting tool is simply good company and a shared glass.

- **“QI Night”:**

A fun and successful trivia night modelled on the BBC show and hosted by President Tonie (in the spirit of Stephen Fry or Sandi Toksvig). Featuring absurd facts, laughs, and surprise insights — including what cheese does to dreams. Attended by a small audience that may grow into a future Club highlight.

- **Friday 13th December – “Hail & Heart” Tea BBQ:**

Held at Island Park just two months after the storm, this event kicked off our public efforts to advocate for Casterton’s recovery. Co-hosted with the Lions Club and Old Courthouse Community Centre team, it drew over 120 locals and set the stage for the community-wide insurance response that followed. A turning point in both Rotary action and town morale.

- **Bowls Club Fundraiser & Social Night:**

A joint effort with the Lions and the Community Centre team to raise funds for green upgrades at Casterton Bowls Club. PP Shane Gill served as MC and entertainer, bringing humour and energy to the night. A great example of fun with purpose.

- **Joint Meeting with Lions Club:**

This dinner meeting supported Casterton Primary School and children's vision screening, later boosted through the United Way Shark Pitch and Beyond Bank support.

- **Community Expo:**

Led by the Old Courthouse Community Centre, this Town Hall event brought together over 50 organisations. Rotary used the opportunity to connect with newcomers and potential members — a strong reminder that visibility leads to vitality.

- **“Why We Still Have a Paper of Our Own”:**

Guest speaker Richard Beks shared the long and colourful history of the Casterton News, and praised current editor Kristy McDonald for keeping it alive and local. Weeks later, Kristy became its owner — journalist, editor, distributor and manager rolled into one. “No Kristy, no Casterton News.”

This wasn’t just about good times — it was about building relationships, creating connection, and lifting spirits when it mattered most.

(Area of Focus: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention, Community Economic Development)

Membership, Milestones & Final Thanks

Our people are our greatest strength. This year we welcomed, farewelled, reconnected — and recognised the unique spirit each member brings to our Rotary family.

We often say Rotary is about service above self — but it's also about relationships, shared purpose, and knowing someone's always in your corner. This year's successes weren't driven by systems or slogans, but by people who show up, pitch in, and lead with heart.

Andrew Seabrook (Rotary Systems and IT Support) Both a Club and District level you kept our records and online systems up to date and navigable — no small task — and helped many of us decode the joys and quirks of Rotary tech not to mention creating a QR code for the Art Show catalogue – saving lots of trees!

Barbara (Barb) Toma (Treasurer and Public Officer): Thank you for all your work behind the scenes this year. You have kept the Club on track financially and administratively with your attention to detail and tying up loose ends. We are so glad that you are staying with us as life presents new adventures.

Belinda Henkel (President Nominee): We love your passion and wonderful way with people — And thank you for joining me as a Mental Health First Aider – it made all the difference to me that we did that course together.

Charles (Charlie) Walsh (Youth Programs): While weeknight meetings are never easy for you to attend, you are always there for the Club when we need you most, supporting us with strength and good humour.

Christine (Chris) Munro (Community Engagement): Chris, your knowledge of 'who's who' and 'who needs what' keeps us connected to the heart of the community. Thank you for speaking up, keeping us grounded and focussed on the things that matter.

Darren Brown (Vocational Service) Every year you make a giant contribution to the Art Show, taking care of the logistics and managing the sales. And we loved the fascinating vocational visits that you arranged for us too. It's so good having you back!

Don and Sue Kilsby: We reluctantly accepted your resignations following your move to Ocean Grove — and were delighted when you returned to help with this year's Kelpie Muster Art Show. In true Rotary spirit, we like to think of ourselves as a bit "Hotel California"... you can check out any time you like, but you can never really leave.

Jean Greene (Club Catering Coordinator) We are so blessed to have you carrying on the Greene family Rotary tradition, looking after us and even keeping our Rotary 'shed' organised. And congratulations on being presented with the Mayor's Personal Award for Voluntary Service – recognising your lifelong contribution and quiet achievement.

Katrina Newman (Environment Director): Thank you for your contribution to maintaining our Club's environmental focus this year — your reminders helped ensure we stayed true to Rotary's commitment to sustainability and protecting the environment.

Kaye Annett (Secretary): You must be the world's best event organiser. There's nothing you can't produce to dress up any occasion, present a raffle with the 'wow' factor or costume a rag tag bunch

of we Rotarians. You do so much for so many, and this year's Glenelg Shire Volunteer of the Year recognition could not have gone to a more worthy winner. Thank you, Kaye, for being my Secretary extraordinaire this Rotary year.

Peter Gorman (Membership Chair): you are a wonderful ambassador for Rotary in all that you do, always looking for opportunities to welcome new members into our community and introducing them to our Club. Thank you also for your contribution to the arts and culture of Casterton, you set a fine example for us all.

Ron McCormick (Corporal) thank you for 'posting posters', keeping the little pantry stocked and getting the word out when there's an event that needs promoting — and for your exceptional skills in keeping us in order whenever the need arises. A challenging task!

Shane Gill (Sergeant-at-Arms) you bring laughter, wisdom and a sense of anticipation to every meeting with "*Shane's Handy Hints*", and your singing's pretty good too!! You light up our meetings and make Rotary a fun place to be.

Sheryl-Lee Brown (Art Show Coordinator and Youth Protection Officer), Shez, your work as a paramedic often calls you away and yet you step up to help whenever you can. Thank you for making our Art Show shine, for always being a willing pair of hands and for supporting President Pete as Secretary in the coming year.

Wally Walsh (Foundation Chair) — a special thanks for spreading the word through "*Not the Dot*" and for capturing the year's activity with creative minute-taking. Every Club should have a chronicler — many don't. We are so fortunate to have you as ours. Thank you also for your care for the many loyal Art Show exhibitors who feel, and rightly so, that they are individually valued and known here in Casterton. And finally, I am especially blessed to have you at my side as 'road manager', husband and friend.

Passing the Baton

To Incoming President Peter Broomhead — Thank you.

You've already led once during the unpredictable days of 2020, just as the COVID pandemic changed everything. Now, you return to clearer skies (we hope!) and a Club that is strong, connected, and ready for the next chapter. Your willingness to step up again is a gift to this Club and to our town. We are in good hands.

To every Rotarian, partner, supporter, and friend — thank you for making 2024–25 a year of resilience, recovery, and real community. Together, we've lived our values and lifted our town.

Here's to what comes next.

— *President Tonie Thiel, Rotary Club of Casterton 2024–25*

Rotary International, South Pacific Zone, District 9780 & the Rotary Club of Casterton

Connecting globally, leading regionally, representing locally in Rotary's evolving structure.

Rotary International:

There has been a last-minute change in Rotary's global leadership. Mário César Martins de Camargo from Brazil, originally selected to be the 2025–26 Rotary International President, has resigned from the position. The current President is Stephanie A. Urchick, and Francesco Arezzo from Italy has now been selected to take office as Rotary International President on 1 July 2025.

South Pacific Zone – Regionalisation Pilot:

Rotary is currently conducting a Regionalisation Pilot Project within our zone, which includes all clubs in Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific Islands, and Timor Leste. This pilot aims to modernise and streamline Rotary's operations by improving public image, increasing flexibility, and enhancing support for clubs. One key change is a shift away from the traditional district model to a system of Rotary Community Groups (RCGs) based on geography and connection.

Rotary Community Leader (RCL):

Each RCG is led by a Rotary Community Leader (RCL). The Rotary Club of Casterton is part of the Border Group, which includes clubs in Bordertown, Casterton, Millicent, Mt Gambier, Mt Gambier West, Mt Gambier Lakes, and Naracoorte. With no RCL initially appointed, our Club President Tonie Thiel stepped in as temporary leader and continued as RCL for the remainder of the 2024–25 Rotary year. From 1 July 2025, Jeff Wiese, President of the Rotary Club of Bordertown, will take over the role.

The Steering Group:

Tonie Thiel has also been selected to represent the District Governor Elect (DGE) cohort on the South Pacific Zone Steering Group overseeing the pilot. The pilot is scheduled to run until a formal decision is made regarding its continuation in 2026–27, when Tonie will commence her term as District Governor for District 9780.

District 9780 & the Rotary Club of Casterton:

Our small club has played a growing leadership role at the district level. Over its 78-year history, only five members had taken on District roles in the first 70 years, including:

- Robbie Greene, District Youth Exchange Committee (early 1980s)
- Wally Walsh, same committee (2010–2016, Coordinator for France & Germany)
- Darren Brown, Assistant Governor for Group 1 (similar to the current Border Group)
- Graeme Cox, Assistant Governor – Services (2017)
- Ian Esmore, Communications Manager, Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS), until his passing in 2022

As of 2024–25, the Rotary Club of Casterton holds the following District positions:

- Tonie Thiel – District Governor Nominee (DGN), Assistant Governor Learning & Development (AG L&D), District Trainer, Rotary Community Leader, Border Group
- Andrew Seabrook – District IT Support and Microsoft 365 Specialist

These contributions demonstrate the increasing impact of our club at District and Zone levels, reflecting Rotary's core value of service through leadership.

SNAPSHOTS, HOT SHOTS & LONGSHOTS 2024-25



Stephanie Urchick
Rotary International
World President
Foundation Trustee
PP Rotary Club of
McMurray, Pennsylvania,
USA,



Lesley Sheden
District Governor
D9780
PP RC of Torquay



Chrstine Dufty
District Governor Elect
D9780 2025/26
PP RC of Nhill



Tonie Thiel
DG Nominee
(D9780 2026/27)
AG Learn. & Dev.
D9780 Trainer
RCL Border Group
President RC of Casterton



Kaye Annett
Secretary
PP RC of Casterton



Barb Toma
Treasurer
Public Officer
RC of Casterton

2025 -2026



Francesco Arezzo,
International World
President
Rotary Club of Ragusa,
Italy



Christine Dufty
District Governor
District 9780
Rotary Club of Nhill



Tonie Thiel
District Governor Elect
District 9780
Rotary Club of Casterton



Peter Broomhead
President
Rotary Club of Casterton



Sheryl-Lee Brown
Secretary
Rotary Club of Casterton



Barb Toma
Treasurer &
Public Officer
Rotary Club of
Casterton









Financial Report 2024/2025

The Year 2024/25 has brought about challenges and disappointments, predominantly the last minute cancellation of our MAGIC Open Day for the third consecutive time and the abandonment of the long running Ballarat Rotary Car Raffle. Both these events have been major contributors in the past to our fund-raising tallies. The disruption caused following the town hailstorm disaster also provided challenges and opportunities. However, in the true Casterton Rotary spirit and energy we have soldiered on, and I am pleased to report 2024/25 has been another financially successful year.

Projects in 2024/25 that have supported our fundraising:

Kelpie Muster Art Show	\$6185
Inaugural John Hughes Memorial Easter Raffle	\$2520
Chooklotto	\$2303
Catering Street Drag Meeting	\$1577
Catering Sandford Music Festival	\$ 670
Members donations (Fines etc.)	\$ 333
CMH Fun Run	\$ 310

A total of \$13,898 with the Kelpie Art Show, a well-rewarded result for the massive amount of work needed to put this event together. Our inaugural John Hughes Memorial Easter Raffle has been an excellent replacement for the cancelled Ballarat Car Raffle. Chooklotto continues to provide monthly contributions enabling us to provide a huge amount of support to our local community.

Members continue to support the Rotary Foundation 'Polio Plus' fund, and we have contributed this financial year the sum of \$2,500.

Support in 2024/25 has been provided to the following:

Sandford Music Festival (stage & equipment)	\$1500
Dergholm Hall Committee	\$ 500
Youth HQ Hands Up Rental Assistance	\$1300
Blaze Aid	\$ 500
Polio Plus & Rotary Health	\$ 400
Glenelg Way School Eye Health Program	\$ 500
Youth Support, Kaniva College	\$ 250
Casterton Vice Regal Bank	\$1000
Community Hail & Hearty Gathering	\$ 900

A total of \$6,850 of which \$3,419 being withdrawn from the Chooklotto Funds.

The introduced 'Free Bus - Blood Bank' program, proving successful and gaining momentum, received support from members and the Casterton Memorial Hospital, keeping expenses minimal, \$119 in total.

The hailstorm disaster of October 2024 impacting our community and having a catastrophic impact on Casterton businesses and residents opened the door for Casterton Rotarians to swing into action providing well-being support, assisting recovery and compensation processes. In conjunction with the Lions Club and the Community Centre a 'Hail & Hearty' community free BBQ for all residents was provided for support, government, and insurance follow-up action.

Investment - Bendigo Term Deposit

We topped up our Bendigo Bank Term Deposit this year with \$6,723 from our Operating Account to

provide a \$20,000 investment, currently on a 12-month period @ 4.75%, due for renewal on the 24th July 2025.

Operating Account - Year 2024/25 Activities in Summary (Bendigo Bank)

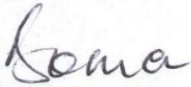
2024/25 Total Revenue received including Member dues	\$44,709
2024/25 Total Payments made, including District & International fees	\$39,221
2024/25 Year to Date Total Profit on Year's activity	\$ 5,488
2023/24 Prior Year Result	\$23,661
2024/25 Year to Date Surplus	\$29,149

There have been nil additions to our assets in 2024/25. Our small 6x4 trailer has been sold privately for the sum of \$350.

Following another successful year, increasing our surplus by \$5,488, 2025/26 year will have a very viable opening balance of \$29,149 for the 2025/26 year.

Holding a \$20,000 Investment we have a cash holding of \$49,149. We will again be in a position to build on our Investment for future planning of 'drawing board' projects.

Congratulations to all Casterton Rotarians on a solid working year and being rewarded with a positive financial result.



Barb Toma
Treasurer

Our Casterton Exchange Student Honour Board

1965	Errol Reid	to	Philippines
1967	Rita Miller	from	U.S.A
1968	Bryony Edwards	to	Canada
1969	Junko Tamada	from	Japan
1970	Neville Cowland	to	Canada
1971	Rick Robinson	from	U.S.A
1972	Ian Bond	to	Canada
1973	Meredith Gill	to	Japan
1974	Ken Allan	to	Japan
1975	Michiko Yanagisawa	from	Japan
1976	Greg Earl	to	Philippines
1978	Valerie Roth	from	Canada
1980	Marion Baulch	to	U.S.A
1982	Tony van Haldren	from	South Africa
1983	Belinda Brown	to	Japan
1983	Eric van Duin	from	Holland
1985	Dean Murphy	to	South Africa
1986	Anne Maree Keikkinen	from	Finland
1987	Sophie Tischler	to	Finland
1988	Michelle Booth	from	South Africa
1988	Jenelle Currie	to	Brazil
1989	Masato Kobayashi	from	Japan
1991	Anna Flanders	to	Denmark
1992	Ulla Ilvejsel	from	Denmark
1995	Jessica Hill	to	Mexico
1997	Daniel Aguilar	from	Mexico
1998	Josh Richardson	to	U.S.A
1999	Karin Lonstrup	from	Denmark
2009	Venla Haapala	from	Finland
2010	Charles Walsh	to	Germany
2011	Max Wildon	from	Germany
2012	Andrew Walsh	to	Sweden
2013	Nathali Hakansson	from	Sweden

