



ROMAC
 Rotary
 Oceania Medical
 Aid for Children
 A Program of the Rotary Districts
 of Australia and New Zealand

ROMAC reflections

Issue # 2 - 2010



Is ROMAC a local Rotary programme?

It is, of course, an international one as the underprivileged children we bring to Australia and New Zealand are our international neighbours primarily from the Pacific Rim.

But it's also a local one for a number of reasons.

First, the required medical procedures are carried out here in Australia and New Zealand by our dedicated doctors and support staff in our local hospitals.

Second, our local children benefit from the valuable experience our caring doctors and surgeons gain in treatment of severe cases that normally would not be accessible to them.

And as you, dear readers, are aware, no Australian or New Zealand child is disadvantaged by bringing in these children as ROMAC adheres to strict immigration guidelines.

Finally, the money that you donate is spent right here supporting our local communities, from the hospitals at which the children are treated to the wonderful, mostly ethnic families who host them.

So next time someone asks you if ROMAC is an international or local Rotary programme, please let them know that it's both!

Burns sisters meet ROMAC Patron Max Walker

Celebrity cricketer and ROMAC Patron Max Walker made a stellar appearance at the Rotary Club of Pine Rivers 50th Anniversary celebration in Brisbane, where the proceeds were being donated to ROMAC and Polio Plus.

As I have been sisters Rafika and Uswatun Rasmiddin's carer for the past two years - an unusually long time for a ROMAC patient - I asked them if they would like to go to this party with me. Their answer, of course, was a resounding 'yes!' They were severely burnt in an earthquake on their island (off Aceh in Indonesia) when they were seven and eight years old respectively, and were left untreated until two years later when Jodie Ranford, whilst working with the Red Cross, found and referred them to ROMAC.

We all bundled into my car for the long drive that was a very noisy trip as both girls were trying to tell me everything that had happened over the past few weeks since I'd seen them. Their excitement mounted as we got closer to the venue.. When we arrived the girls became even more excited when they saw their photos on a huge screen!

I noticed Max Walker in the crowd and approached with the girls to introduce them. Max was just as thrilled as the girls! Later, when Max saw me lining them against a ROMAC banner to take a photo, he came over with his camera and we all took photos of each other - it was like we were all one big happy family! I really felt everybody in the room was surprised to have ROMAC patients in their midst. I know they were a great hit with everybody, and was so pleased to have the opportunity to bring them to this important event for Pine Rivers

Continued page 3



Invite Max Walker to perform at your club!

Legendary cricketer, witty TV personality, international celebrity motivational speaker, successful author with seven #1 best sellers and proud ROMAC Patron, Max Walker could soon be your club's celebrity guest speaker! Max was the featured speaker at

Continued page 3



Tiny tot Anna wins her burns battle

Anna came from Vanuatu for treatment for severe burns to 40% of her body. Anna was sleeping when a candle in the family hut overturned and ignited her mosquito net, causing her bedding to catch on fire. Dr Basil Leodoro (who had trained in Australia) resuscitated Anna and, using techniques learned during his time here, was able to perform minor skin grafts.

It became obvious that local expertise and equipment was not adequate to save Anna's life, so Dr Leodoro contacted his Australian colleagues. ROMAC brought Anna to The Children's Hospital at Westmead for specialized burns treatment. Dr John Harvey, Chairman of the NSW Severe Burns Injury Service said that her prognosis now is "excellent". Dr Harvey gave credit to Dr Leodoro and said that his early intervention had saved Anna's life. Anna's mother Marie had travelled to Sydney with Anna and was extremely thankful to all involved with Anna's care and recovery.



Committee members visiting ROMAC burns patient Joyce, second from left, are Leighton Phu (dental), Lien Nguyen (pharmacy) and An Duong (pharmacy).

Vietnamese uni students support ROMAC

VHSSA is an association of Vietnamese health science students (medical, dental and pharmacy) studying at Melbourne Universities. The VHSSA committee followed up last year's successful ball with 300 attendees at a recent function, with the proceeds going to ROMAC. There was also a sponsorship contribution from Gribble's Medical.

Critically ill Joyce who suffered from severe burns resulting from falling into an open fire, was being treated at Melbourne's Monash Medical Centre. She was there with her mum Lucia who

stayed at Ronald McDonald House. Student Leighton said it was very rewarding to see the results of all their efforts, and they gave Joyce a doll representing her favourite TV character to remind her of her stay in Australia: on her island they do not have electricity much less TV!

ROMAC's Southern Regional Director John Benger noted that frequently, via a Church or ethnic community, many nationalities came together in Australia to support a patient. On top of this the caring nursing staff made Joyce an honorary nurse with photo ID card.



K'Chin launches bike ride

Popular Vietnamese patient K'Chin hit the headlines last year when he launched the Rotary Club of Murwillumbah Central's Bike Ride.

K'Chin spoke confidently at the launch and referred to the amputation of his lower right leg and fitting of a prosthetic leg. He added that "It has always been my lifelong dream to walk tall on two legs".

K'Chin lived in a remote village in Vietnam with a badly deformed leg. He underwent many orthopaedic procedures in Brisbane, returned home where, unfortunately, a severe infection set in. When ROMAC brought him back at age 18 he was mature enough, after professional counselling, to make a decision to amputate. He underwent intense occupational therapy and today he proudly shows off his prosthetic leg.

Launching the start of the bike ride K'Chin said "I am proud to be involved today and I appreciate the dedication of the riders and the Murwillumbah Central Rotary Club".

Special thanks to Tony Worrad the organizer of this successful event, with proceeds of \$7,000 donated to ROMAC.

Manukau City Sunrise wins our \$2,500 lucky draw!

Congratulations to this New Zealand Rotary Club. The draw took place on 24 September 2009 at a joint meeting of the Darling Range and Kalamunda WA Rotary Clubs.

Mrs Vickie Pearce, W.A. State Manager for the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, drew the winning Club's name.



Murray residents get the drift on ROMAC

Nothing could be better than the mighty Murray on a hot, sunny, long weekend, with thousands of tourists camping, boating, swimming and enjoying their holiday.

Max Walker *Continued from front page*

District 9570's recent Conference where he entertained the audience with his usual charm, wit and wisdom on cricket, his family, Rotary and ROMAC. The event was professionally filmed, and Max has generously given permission for it to be shown exclusively at Rotary clubs and Rotary events.

There are two versions on one DVD: the full length 54 minute one, perhaps most suitable as an entertaining, multi-club, dinner/fund raiser, and an approx 10 minute ROMAC content only one that is an excellent 'replacement' for a guest speaker, especially as you don't even have to pay for his meal let alone his celebrity speaking fee!

If you would like a copy of this DVD contact ROMAC Northern Region Director PP Bill Benham, with either how you intend to use it or ask Bill for the reasonable conditions of use. *Bill's contact information is (07) 3348 9966, benhome@bigpond.net.au or PO Box 3510 Tingalpa DC, Qld 4173.*

For more information on Max Walker, visit www.maxwalker.com.au.

Congratulations to Greg Gallone, President of the Rotary Club of Craigieburn, and his team for taking advantage of a unique promotion for ROMAC. His many enthusiastic members came to the party with a Life Raft tour along the Murray for 80 kilometres.

Maybe not as famous as Thor Heyerdahl's Kon Tiki raft drift across the Pacific, but raising the magnificent sum of \$6,000 for ROMAC. It was a big ask for so many members to give their time and skills for this Life Raft tour.

Burns sisters meet Max *Continued from front page*

Rotary Club who generously support ROMAC. The big thing for the girls was to collect as many helium filled balloons (blue and gold with '50th' printed on them) to take home to play with. You should have seen my car with about 40 odd balloons packed in the back of the 4X4 - I think we could have floated home with all that gas on board! As it was a rather lengthy drive back across Brisbane northern suburbs to Kuraby, in no time the girls were fast asleep.

At their next hospital dressing change they were both full of stories to tell of the wonderful night they had with 'Mr Max' as they called him. When we were leaving the Pine Rivers celebration they had both called out, "Thank you Mr. Max".

You may ask if I enjoy being part of ROMAC? YES! I'm so proud of what Rotary does for Humanity. This is the only job I know where the pay comes in the form of hugs and kisses. Miss a couple of days and the children are so thrilled to see you. ROMAC children live forever in my heart.

Judy Percy (PHF), ROMAC Carer's Coordinator, Rotary District 9600.

A weekend of family entertainment on the Raft also provided enjoyment for people in the towns and families camping along the Murray banks.

We thank the many sponsors who backed this event and the Club members who had sausage sizzles along the way in really great weather.

Club President Greg was full of praise for the outstanding efforts of all concerned. "It was a real team effort raising such a large amount to change the lives of needy children".

Special thanks to Greg, the Craigieburn Club members, Phil Rosenberg (ROMAC Marketing Director), all the generous sponsors, Eric Rooth, together with Peter and Tas Yallouris from "Print a Sign". A great effort and a great result.

ROMAC thanks Doug Wilmott for an exceptional effort in coordinating this fund raiser, and also congratulates Mario Arfi and Simon Mazzoli for volunteering to coordinate this year's event.

31 happy children

Last Rotary year ROMAC changed and saved the lives of 31 underprivileged and deserving children. They were treated for severe burns, heart, neurosurgery, tumours, orthopaedic and other threatening ailments. The demand to help more children is stronger than ever with, currently, over 40 children on our waiting list. We'll work hard to find hospital beds for them. Thanks to donations from caring Rotarians and their Rotary clubs we are able to continue this humanitarian work.

To find out more about ROMAC, here's who to contact

Whether you'd like to know more about our children, how we operate, how easy it is to be a host Rotary club, an occasional patient driver or request a club presentation, simply contact your closest ROMAC Regional Director, below, and they'll put you directly in touch with your closest District ROMAC chairperson.

ROMAC Board Chairman

PDG Ian Wright *Rotary Club of Darling Range*
10 Kareen Way, South Guildford, WA 6055
(M) 0408 680160 ianwright@iinet.net.au

CENTRAL REGION *South Australia, Southern Northern Territory and parts of NSW (Broken Hill & Wentworth) and Victoria (The Riverland; eg: Mildura, Robinvale, Red Cliffs)*

Director PDG Dick Milner *Rotary Club of Gawler Light* Lot 4 Lyndoch Road Concordia SA 5118 merlin@twpo.com.au
(H) 08 8523 1716

EASTERN REGION *Central, Eastern and Southern New South Wales and the ACT*
Director PDG Bob Richards, *Rotary Club of Sutherland*, 30 Warren Ave Grays Point NSW 2232. (H) 02 9525 0609 (M) 0407 894 548 richardsbob@bigpond.com

NORTHERN REGION *Northern New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory plus Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands*

Director PP Bill Benham, *Rotary Club of Port of Brisbane* PO Box 3510 Tingalpa DC Qld 4173 (H) 07 3348 9966 benhome@bigpond.net.au

SOUTHERN REGION *Victoria and Tasmania*

Director John Benger *Rotary Club of Richmond* 78 Callaghan Ave Glen Waverley Vic 3150. (M) 0414 221 143 jbenger@bigpond.net.au

WESTERN REGION *Western Australia*

Director PP Joan Varian 5A Hibernia Rise, Sorrento WA 6020 (M) 0409 594 353 joanvarian@bigpond.com

NEW ZEALAND

Dr Eric Horne, 97d Carter Road Oratia (W) +64 818 7111 (H) +64 818 3654 e.horne@clear.net.nz

Patron-in-Chief Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Australian Patron Max Walker. **New Zealand Patron** Past Rotary International President Bill Boyd.

Mission Statement "To provide medical treatment for children from developing countries in the form of life saving and/or dignity restoring surgery not accessible to them in their home country."

The objectives of ROMAC } To provide hope when there is no hope } To restore dignity to human life } To transform a child's life } To provide the best medical and surgical expertise



Together we can save the life of a child

Children like Asi, left, who had an eight hour operation to remove his frontal encephalocele by a team of 11 doctors.

Thanks to ROMAC, Asi is now living a normal life.

Asi is one of over 350 underprivileged and deserving children that ROMAC has proudly treated for dignity restoring and life saving operations. These children are from humble backgrounds and remote areas. Some are shunned by their local communities and may have to go begging on the streets. Too many might have died.

Together we can give them a better life.

Fortunately ROMAC is run entirely by volunteers, community spirited hospitals reduce costs and compassionate surgeons donate their expertise.

This admirable generosity significantly increases the value of every dollar donated by caring people like you, and whilst ROMAC brings these deserving children from overseas, the money you donate stays in our country.

Last year ROMAC treated 31 children. Unfortunately there is no shortage of potential patients, and if we only had the finances we could treat more of the 40 or so children on our waiting list.

If you, your Rotary club or company donated a few dollars, \$1,000 or more, ROMAC will be able to proudly continue changing and saving these children's lives. Importantly, you'll have the personal satisfaction of knowing that you'll have the gratitude of children like Asi and their appreciative families for supporting this Australian/New Zealand Rotary program.

Yes!

I would love to save a child's life. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Reflections #3 2010

I enclose a cheque for [] \$25 [] \$50 [] \$100 [] \$500 [] \$1,000 [] \$2,500 [] \$5,000 [] Other amount \$ _____

Or debit my [] Visa [] MasterCard for a [] one-off or [] annual payment of \$ _____ that I can cancel at any time.

Card # _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ Expiry date ____ / ____

Card holder name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Country _____ Tel _____ Email _____

Cheques payable to ROMAC. Thank you.

ROMAC. Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children Ltd

PO Box 779 Parramatta, NSW 2124, Australia, or 21 Ciprian Place, Henderson, Auckland, New Zealand.

www.romac.org.au



ROMAC.
Rotary
Oceania Medical
Aid for
Children

A Program of the Rotary Districts of Australia and New Zealand

