



2009 - 2010

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2009**

# THORNLIE WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PO Box 84, THORNLIE WA 6988

**Meeting:** 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm Tuesday at the Gosnells Golf Club,  
Warton Road Thornlie –

**Apologies:** **Andy Hopper** (M) 0409 099 941 by 10.00AM Monday

**Pres.** Mike Raspa (M) 0424 168 496 (H) 9452 0158  
**Pres Elect.** Andy Hopper (M) 0409 099 941 (H) 9459 1627  
**Secretary.** Doug Parker (M) 0419909179

## Next Week Duties

**28<sup>th</sup> July 09**

### Attendance

Ron Bradborn  
Ron Sloan

### Property and Fellowship

Ray Smith  
Vin Rogers

### Chairman

John Stockbridge

### Vote of Thanks

Colin Waters

### Rotary Information

Geoff Wiltshire

### Bring-N-Buy

**26<sup>th</sup> July 09**

Ron & Yvonne  
Bradock  
Vin & Sylvia Rogers  
Ted Evans

### Bulletin Editor

*Chris Ralph*

### Program

Luke Staal -  
Handicamp Buddy –  
- Christopher  
Piotrowski, Camper –

**Sergeant Lloyd** opened our meeting and welcomed Ron Thatcher from Neerigen Brook. Ron is departing next week for Bali to start the planning for the “Bali Tanks” project and will also stop over in Thailand for the start of phase two of the literacy project. This second phase would coordinate the activities from Rotary Clubs in Thailand, Australia, Japan and Oregon in the USA

President Mike then assumed the rostrum and announced

- The resignation of Vic Rich. Vic would attend another meeting and formally say good bye
- Vic’s resignation will also mean some tinkering with the BnB roster in coming weeks
- Andy, Colin and Lloyd will be representing Thornlie at Maddington’s golf day this coming Sunday. Mike will circulate the details
- Correspondence has been received from the Federal member for Gosnells who advised he is seeking federal funding to build an activity centre adjacent to the Thornlie Skate board park

PP **Ron Bradborn** provided the day’s Rotary information, regarding a program being run by Melbourne Rotary club where they organised treks, for potential Rotarians through Nepal.

As part of the program, the trekkers, visited a number of Rotary program operating in the area and not only gained an appreciation of the work of Rotary but also a desire to join the organisation.

Each program consisted of 12 participants and cost the individuals \$2800 to cover expenses

The program still saw benefits even if membership didn’t eventuate as the bonding to the trekkers was a plus in itself.

<b>Following Weeks Duties</b>	Members expressed their undying appreciation to PP Ron for his deep research and thorough knowledge of Rotary Information, whilst clambering to read his hand held reference material.
<b>4<sup>th</sup> August 09</b>	
<p><b>Attendance</b> Wayne Brouwer Ron Bradock</p> <p><b>Property and Fellowship</b> Ron Bradborn Ross Evans</p> <p><b>Chairman</b> Not Required</p> <p><b>Vote of Thanks</b> Not Required</p> <p><b>Rotary Information</b>  Ted Evans</p> <p><b>Bring-N-Buy</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> August 09</b></p> <p>Ray &amp; Lois Smith Geoff and Lorraine Wiltshire John Mitchell</p> <p><b>Bulletin Editor</b> <i>Chris Ralph</i></p> <p><b>Program</b> Committee Meetings</p>	<p><b>Ross</b> advised he had received a thank you letter from the Parkwood Primary school for our contribution of \$1500 towards their intensive English camp</p> <p><b>PDG Frank</b> handed in last years International Directory and a copy of the Australian &amp; New Zealand Directory for those who may be travelling in the future – The Directory now resided with President Mike. Again those that are travelling – the Rotary House swap is being coordinated by PDG Phil for those interested.</p> <p>Trivia –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President Mike has booked a cruise on the Pacific Sun for January 2010</li> <li>• Colin Ralph sent a blog after the second test saying 1- 0,1- 0, 1 - 0</li> <li>• Ron Thatcher was explaining the difficulties his club has on partners night as it coincides with the skimpy night at the tavern</li> <li>• Sylvia was proudly wearing her Paul Harris badge – didn't see too many others</li> <li>• Visiting Rotarian Ron's club , Neerigen Brook, was one of 8 clubs chartered by PDG Ron in his year</li> <li>• Neerigen Brook meet at the Narrogin Inn, which is also the drinking hole of one of the states OMG's</li> <li>• Colin R's son was rushed to hospital while he was there - collapsed Oesophagus</li> </ul> <p><b>Kanyana Project – PP Ray</b> advised the project “was progressing” and now up to the stage where some painting was required. Mike, Lloyd, Ray, Chris and Ron put their hand up to meet at 08.00 hrs on Saturday and seal the ceiling and walls.</p>
<p><b>REMEMBER</b></p> <p><b>MEAL NUMBERS MUST BE ADVISED</b></p> <p><b>MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE \$190</b></p>	<p>Andy, Frank Ray and L:ois would then do the first paint coat on the Sunday Morning</p> <p>Once that work was done, carpets and floor coverings could be organised.</p> <p>The two PP's Ron's had visited the storage area at Van Aurich's and make decisions on the Rotary property being held – to the skip as expeditiously as possible.</p>

DIARY	Hopefully what remained and considered valuable could be housed in a plastic storage box and accommodated in the BNB central shed
<p><b>JULY</b>  17<sup>th</sup>  Phil &amp; Kay's Anniversary  21<sup>st</sup>  Ross' Birthday  Frank Keays Victorian Bush Fires - Marysville  25<sup>th</sup>  John M's Birthday  28<sup>th</sup>  John S's birthday  26<sup>th</sup>  Program Luke Staal - Handicamp Buddy -- Christopher Piotrowski, Camper --</p>	<p>Sergeant Lloyd then kicked off and did his thing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the poms hadn't beaten Oz at lords since 1934 he fined those that could remember that occasion – PDG's Ron and Frank put up their hands.</li> <li>• Ron Thatcher and John Mitchell for ignoring the Government warning and travelling to Bali next month</li> <li>• PP Ron for admitting he doesn't read the bulletin</li> <li>• The two Johns for their birthdays</li> <li>• PDG Ron for his two escorts at changeover – age has some rewards</li> <li>• Ron Bradborn for getting two sweets with his meal</li> <li>• PDG Frank for bring his own cheer squad along</li> <li>• President for swearing in front of the bar staff</li> <li>• Ross for his birthday</li> <li>• Ron Bradborn for awakening – hearing the temp on Monday was 1.5 and then refusing to get up</li> <li>• Chris for returning to the fold and leaving Colin in Pommy land</li> </ul>
<p><b>AUGUST</b>  4<sup>th</sup>  Committee Meetings  7<sup>th</sup>  Ron S's Birthday  10<sup>th</sup>  Board meeting  11<sup>th</sup>  Yvonne's Birthday  Program – Club Assembly  12<sup>th</sup>  Geoff's Birthday  16<sup>th</sup>  Ted &amp; Lois's Anniversary  Chris B's Birthday  Anet's Birthday  18<sup>th</sup>  Ron Bradock's Birthday  Club Assembly  19<sup>th</sup>  Vin's Birthday  20<sup>th</sup>  Christine's Birthday  28<sup>th</sup>  Ron &amp; Yvonne's Anniversary</p>	<p>Guest speaker for the evening was PDG Frank Keays, discussing the February bush fires in Victoria</p> <p><i>Editors note – as a result of the fire the club decided to donate \$10,000 to the Rotary club of Yea to use for the benefit of the local community in any manner that club deemed fit. It was interesting to note that other clubs around Australia had similar ideas and in total the local club of Yea received \$35,00 from other Rotary Clubs</i></p> <p>Frank basically divided his address into three sections. The event. The aftermath and the recovery</p>
<p><b>SEPTEMBER</b>  1<sup>st</sup>  Committee Meetings  3<sup>rd</sup>  Faye's Birthday  8<sup>th</sup>  Special Board Meeting for DG  District Governors Visit –  <b>Partners Night</b>  23<sup>rd</sup>  Mikes Birthday</p>	<p><b>The Event</b> its self can best be summed up by extracting an address given to the Rotary club of Yea by Neil Beer , the local Administrative Officer for the Victorian Country Fire Authority.</p> <p>The following is an Extract from Rotary Club of Yea Bulletin dated 11<sup>th</sup> June 202009</p>

## **“Guest Speaker: Neil Beer**

Neil is a man with many hats, farmer, car dealership, sponsor of our Art show and Country Fire Authority (CFA) group officer and it was in that capacity that he spoke to the members. Neil, group officer for the Yea CFA spoke about how the CFA is structured in our region (Region 12) and talked about the lead up to Black Saturday and the day itself as well as the weeks following. He read part of his submission to the Royal Commission.

Neil began by saying that Region 12 is administrated in Seymour and the area covered extends to Yea, Alexandra, Wallan, Heathcote, Avenel, Glenburn and elsewhere and is quite an extensive area. The Yea group consists of nine CFA units: Yea Urban, Highlands, Limestone, Glenburn, Flowerdale, Strath Creek, Reedy Creek and Murrindindi.

Neil explained that there is one group officer and five deputy group officers and they administer various brigades. There are two catchments – Murrindindi (Yea and Alexandra) and Mitchell. Neil gave accounts that leading up to Black Saturday, there were many announcements in the media warning of the severity of the season ahead. He talked of operational procedures such as Red Alert Days, which are called internally. On those days a roster has to be sent into the region with names available for an incident team consisting of planning, logistics and communication.

Neil explained that prior to Black Saturday, he received an email from David Packman, a fire specialist and it was forwarded to the Police and all brigades and it read “I doubt if the state has ever before faced such extreme conditions. Prospects are horrible and the worst I have ever seen.”

Neil went on to describe in quite technical terms what the forecast for Black Saturday was. The fire index was predicted to be 186 with a spread of 6 - 7kms with spotting up to 20 - 25kms and flame height up to 90m, all way above normal situations. Fire intensity was 100 megawatts, where the maximum for fire fighters is 2.5 megawatts.

The earlier quote from David went on to say regarding his prediction for Black Saturday “You have no idea how much I hope I am wrong.”

Neil then went on to talk about the actual day. Yea headquarters were set up at 10am and even then it looked like all the predictions were coming true. At 13.05hrs, a phone call from Region 12 requested a strike team to go to Kilmore East (five trucks and a support vehicle) so out of nine in our area, five were already deployed. A tanker was kept at Flowerdale and Highlands due to their isolation.

At 14.57, a call came in from Murrindindi saying a fire had started there. At this stage, Neil explained that the pager system of communication was already becoming overloaded, internet was down and it was becoming challenging to communicate effectively. A strike team from Alexander sent to Kilmore East was recalled. The afternoon just got worse. Flowerdale fire started and when people asked if they should stay or go, the brigade said go to Yea. It was estimated that Yea had between 4,500 and 5000 additional people in town. All roads were closed and Yea had people evacuated from a number of areas including Flowerdale, Glenburn and Kinglake, with only two police on duty.

Neil explained that at Yea they were under enormous pressure, with facilities failing, communications struggling, no air conditioning and 47 degrees heat. As Neil said, normally Total Fire Ban days might have 50 fires across the state but on Black Saturday, there were over 300 fires burning. Resources were stretched.

At the public meeting on the Monday following, Neil said to the packed Town hall that it doesn't matter how many more fire fighting teams had been present; they wouldn't have been able to make any difference to the fires. It was so intense and fast.

Neil ended by saying that in regard to the CFA, the majority are volunteers and they believe they did everything possible on that particular Black Saturday, in incredibly difficult circumstances. Neil has sent a detailed submission to the Royal Commission."

### **Towns and Villages mentioned in Neil Beer's address**

<b>Town/village</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Distance by road from Melbourne</b>	
Alexander	2,200	138kms	Municipal centre & farming
<u>Flowerdale*</u> homes	600	95	Hobby farms and holiday
<u>Glenburn</u> farmers	180	68	Farming and city/hobby
Highlands	50	130	Sheep & cattle grazing
<u>Kilmore East*</u>	90	60	Farming and hobby farms
<u>Kinglake*</u>	1,250	65	Timber, holiday homes
<u>Kinglake West*</u>	200	73	Timber, potato & cattle farms
Limestone	50	81	Farming
<u>Marysville*</u>	500 to 1,500	95	Mountain resort town
<u>Murrindindi</u>	40	75	Timber and farming
<u>Reedy Creek*</u> farms	150	90	Gold prospecting & hobby
<u>Strath Creek</u> farmers	430	104	Farming and city/hobby
Yea	1,600	109	Business centre and farming

Notes: \* Fatalities (confirmed figure of 173 with more than 100 dying in their homes)

Underlined – where houses and businesses have been destroyed

Marysville population varied with the holiday season

These towns and villages are north east of Melbourne

## THE AFTERMATH

Frank and Sylvia recently toured the area and showed a Power point presentation for the devastation some four months later. They

- Visited a number of towns and villages that had suffered from the fires of February 7<sup>th</sup> including – Glenburn where they stayed at Sylvia's family farm, Flowerdale, Kinglake, Kinglake West, Murrindindi and Strath Creek (Franks old home town) and the Marysville area
- More than 90% of Marysville was destroyed – basically all that was left was the Café and the Bakery
- at Kinglake West – all shops and buildings had been destroyed
- A number of people felt they had to stay on their land even if it meant living in a tent or caravan and mostly without electricity. The Australian flag flew at about 50% of the burnt out homes
- The heat was so intense it caused damage to concrete footpaths
- Four months after the fire green shots appeared on the trees nearest roads but 50 metres from the road where the bark had been burnt off the trees and it is obvious that the trees can't survived
- Temporary accommodation units supplied by Fortesque Metal (Andrew Forrest). 45 units were donated and railed from WA within one week of the fires

When they left Victoria on the 16<sup>th</sup> June, out of the 173 fatalities only 69 human remains had been released for funerals, people ask why not use DNA or dental records to identify these people, the simple answer is that these fires were several hundred degrees hotter than a crematorium. thus there is only ash remaining.

An example of two heroes, there were many others

- One of the fire lookout towers that covered the Marysville area, where the observer saw the ferocity and speed of the fire called the Marysville CFA to tell people to go immediately to Alexandra. A number of families took his advice and are alive today. He was on a steel tower with trees cleared from around the base to give 360 degrees visibility, he reported flames higher than 60m
- The second is a local policeman seeing people milling around unsure what to do decided to form a convoy of 40 to 50 people in their cars to follow him out to Healesville with police car leading the way with sirens and lights flashing. Shortly after leaving Marysville when he saw the ferocity and speed of the fire, he thought he was leading these people to their death but, by now it was too late to turn back. They did get through with no crashes or deaths and he is a hero, where he could just as easily be a mass murderer.

### Why did this disaster happen and 173 died?

There are many hundreds of answers to this question, but a few obvious ones

1. The ongoing drought which eventually helped to control the fire when it got into cleared grazing land with little or no fuel
2. For many decades Victoria has been without a forest fuel reduction program and has allowed the former fire trails to be neglected and become useless. A program of prescribed burning is now being introduced for crown land, plus the reintroduction of fire shelters in towns that could be in danger. A number had been built after the 1939 fires but over the years have been neglected
3. Allowing and encouraging people to live in or adjacent to forests and only permitting clearing of the actual building site. One family cleared more than the minimum when

prosecuted were fined \$50,000 but guess what this now the only house standing on that particular road

4. While the WA fuel load is only a fraction of that in the Victorian forests a similar disaster will occur in the Perth hill suburbs given the right conditions – houses that have roofs loaded with dead leaves and branches together with overhanging trees.

## THE RECOVERY

The recovery will take years

Assets will be repaired and replaced within a reasonable time frame

What cannot be replaced and will take considerable time to repair is the personal damage – both Psychological and physical

Normally when one is involved in a tragic event there are three immediate avenues open

- To go down to the local, have a few beer and talk it through with your mates
  - a. This option was viable as many of your friends were dead, the town and the pub had all been burnt down
- Visit friends and neighbours who understand what has happened, and understand you as a person
  - a. In many instances your Friends and neighbours were in a worse situation than yourself and were not capable of offering assistance
- Seek professional counseling and help
  - a. It's a country town – with no services and no accommodation. It isn't viable for these services to establish themselves in such an area

The vote of Thanks was admirably given by Secretary Doug

*Editors night – it was mentioned earlier that the Neerigen Brook club meet at the Narrogin Inn, the drinking hole of one of our OMG. On the Wednesday evening, both clubs were at the tavern doing their thing. The fire had been going for about a week. Maryville was no more and various groups were collecting funds to send to Victoria. During the Rotary meeting two bikies walked in and said that they had seen the fire on the news and immediately introduced a \$10 per head levy on any one drinking in the bar that night.. They handed a beer jug of notes to the Rotary President with a comment – “This better get to Victoria”. There was \$360 in the jug*