

Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Norfolk Island Lions



District N5 is currently blessed with 76 Lions Clubs, two Lioness Clubs and seven Leo Clubs with over 1,850 service minded individuals serving the less fortunate in our community. Amongst these, three Clubs are located outside the

mainland - these are the Norfolk Island Lions, Arthurs Vale Lions and N'flk Ailen Leo on Norfolk Island, an island situated in the South Pacific Ocean between Sydney and Auckland.

The first Lions Club ever to appear on Norfolk is the Norfolk Island Lions Club chartered on 9 May 1964. And this year - 2014, is their Golden Jubilee Year. Indeed, members of the Club had decided to hold their 50th Anniversary celebrations on 27 September. As District Governor, I had the honour of being invited to go along in September to officiate the formal celebration proceedings.

As there are only 2 scheduled weekly flights between Sydney and Norfolk, I decided to go and stay on the island between 22 and 29 September.

The highlight of my visit was of course the 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner which was attended by some 80 Lions and guests with the Hon Gary Hardgrave, Administrator and Lisyle Snell, Chief Minister, as Guests of Honour. As District Governor, I had the privilege of being seated at the top table with Emma next to Lion President David Bell and wife Coral, flanked by the Administrator and the Chief Minister and their wives.

At the dinner, there were a number of formalities. Of course, these would not have been complete without formal speeches. The President spoke first, followed by the Administrator and the Chief Minister. When it was my turn to speak, as it was the 50th Anniversary, I dutifully acknowledged a comprehensive list of individuals and entities, including the President and Past Presidents of the Club, other dignitaries and Lions leaders. In particular, I acknowledged the presence of Lion's Lady Joan Kenny, wife of the much loved late Lion Charter Secretary Ian Kenny for Ian's huge contribu-

tions to the advancement of Lionism on Norfolk. I also praised the wonderful work that Norfolk Lions have performed throughout the past 50 years, including the reconstruction and renovation of the Club House in Kingston, the arrangement and provision of eye tests for the Islanders, the delivery of tens of tons of firewood to the hospital, the provision of audio and music for funeral services, the installation and dismantling of a Merry Go Round for their annual fetes and offering 20-cent rides for kids for decades, the Christmas parties for the elderly and donating Lions Christmas Cakes to them as presents, and the list just went on. I challenged the guests to ponder on a question: 'What would Norfolk have been like over the past 50 years if there weren't any Lions around?' I then encouraged the Lions to continue with their good work and to go from strength to strength in the next 50 years and beyond. I concluded my address by inviting everyone to rise as I proposed a toast to the relentless efforts and selfless contributions of the Club and its Members throughout the past five decades. Afterwards, many came up to me to congratulate me on my address.

The following morning, I came across Joan Kenny again at breakfast. She asked me for a copy of the script of my speech so that she could share it with others. I was flattered but was so embarrassed as I couldn't comply because apart from the Acknowledgment List, I had not written a single word for that speech. In fact, since July I have made over 30 club visitations to date and I am yet to write my



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first script for my speeches! I hope Joan will get around to reading this article and accept the paragraph above as my partial script.

Golden Jubilees are times for celebrations and presentation of gifts. I wouldn't have gone to the 50th birthday party empty handed. So when the right moment arrived, I presented the Norfolk Island Lions my bannerette and a crystal paper weight. I also presented to the Club a metal plate with a golden brim engraved with a big Lions Emblem in the centre set in a wooden frame with a glass front panel. This frame is almost identical to the one presented to the Arthurs Vale Lions at their 25th Anniversary a couple of years ago.

Earlier in March this year, I accompanied then DG Warren to visit Norfolk with a primary goal in mind: to lay the ground work for the 50th Anniversary celebrations in my DG visit in September. When I saw what the Arthurs Vale Lions received for their 25th Anniversary at the Lions' Club House, I decided there and then that I'd present a similar gift to the Norfolk Island Lions. Since then, I had been



communicating with Lion Jan Saal regarding this and I'm grateful to Lion Jan and others for helping me and keeping my gift under wraps until the big moment.

Then members of the Club got together for a "family" picture. I was ecstatic as I was invited to join them in the picture. I realised then that this was going to be one of the most valuable historical pictures that the Club would ever have taken. What a great privilege and distinct honour it was for me to be part of that!

Before I set foot on Norfolk on this occasion, I'd asked for a tight and packed program as I wished to learn as much as possible about the Norfolk Lions and Leos so that I'd be in a better position to assist and support them. Thanks to PDG Beryl Payne and



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Cab Sec Jennifer, a busy Norfolk schedule was in place for me. Apart from the Anniversary Dinner, I paid an official visit to the Hon Gary Hardgrave, Administrator of Norfolk at his office. There I learnt that he has been a Lion for over two decades and that his father is also a Lion in Queensland, responsible for running a circus project raising in excess of \$1 million over the past ten years. Come to think of it, I had actually met Gary a couple of times before in Sydney when he was a Federal Minister. We had a good chat and before I left, I asked if he would look after and assist the Lions on Norfolk whenever he could, which he graciously agreed to do.

I also held rounds of meetings with representatives

from the three Clubs, in joint sessions and with each Club separately. Lion President David Bell asked for a training session and I put together a team and delivered a 2-hour session with special reference to the roles and responsibilities of Club Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers. There was also a brief presentation on Lions Clubs International Foundation.

Also there were one on one meetings when I met and spoke with individuals. There were 12 or more of these sessions when I was able to discuss freely and privately with different Lions and Leos across the spectrum. When I met with the Leos, I was grateful that PDG Beryl was there to accompany me. These discussions provided me with a deeper understanding of the current situation as well as problems and concerns that the Norfolk Lions have. As a result, the District through my team and me, is now in a better position to assist and support them whenever circumstances allow.



When I visited the very nice community hall that the Leos are operating from, I found that it is a facility provided to them, by courtesy of Lion Dennis Sterling. I noticed that the Leos had nowhere to privately file away their club documents. I subsequently asked Leo President Sam to obtain a quote for a filing cabinet. The next day, Sam and I went to a furniture shop where, on behalf of the District,

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I purchased for the Leos a two-drawer metal filing cabinet with lock. Clearly, they were touched by this gesture and were most appreciative. I'm sure this act shows them that We Care as We Serve. I also

hope this will help to re-enthuse them.

In the course of my discussions with Lions, I learnt that the inaugural Norfolk Ocean Challenge — an annual round the island Canoes Paddling tournament, will soon be held in January 2015. It is a week long recreational outrigger challenge which is expected to attract some 200 paddlers as well as spectators. The Norfolk Island Wa'a Outrigger Club are the organisers and they were actively looking for Sponsors across a number of levels. At a meeting with Damien Snell, a representative from Wa'a, I identified an excellent potential area that Lions on Norfolk could engage in: the organisers had to purchase 100 personal floatation devises for their V1 and V6 canoe tournaments which cost some \$3,800. I thought it would help to promote Lions if we took out this sponsorship package while receiving something of value in return. So I put it to Damien that



for us to agree to paying for the floats, the Lions and Leos on Norfolk need to be acknowledged as Sponsors of the event, the Lions Emblem is to be printed on the front and back of the floats exclusively and Lions to have exclusive sausage sizzle and expresso coffee selling rights at the event venue for a five year duration starting from 2015. Damien thought about this and agreed in principle.

Armed with this initial understanding, I then brought the matter up with a number of Lions leaders of Norfolk Island and Arthurs Vale. I explained the potential benefits to them and stated if the Clubs were willing to take up the Sponsorship, I'll see to it that they receive a subsidy from the District to the tune of \$1,500. Before I left the island on 29 September, the entities concerned had already started meaningful dialogues with each other regarding this prospective Lions' Sponsorship.



In mid October, I received an email from Lion President David Bell advising me that the Clubs have decided to take up the Sponsorship. Presently, they are fine tuning the wording in the Agreement and are heading towards having the final Agreement signed soon. I wish our Lions and Leos on Norfolk Island all the very best. I look forward to the day when images of the Lions Emblem appearing on the floaties of the Norfolk paddlers are beamed to the rest of the world. I also look forward to more and more individuals joining the Lions movement on Norfolk as a result of greater exposure and promotion, as the general public become more and more aware of the service projects and contributions of Lions.

By Lion DG Anthony Cheung