

Positioning RAWCS for the future

As many of you know, RAWCS does not do projects directly. Instead, we provide infrastructure for the administrative aspects for Rotarians and the corporate sector to use for humanitarian projects. Our framework allows donations to be tax deductible and ensures your time and resources are not wasted on administrative matters. Our tried and tested policies and procedures have been streamlined over the past five years.

Despite our experience and annual turnover of more than \$20 million, we are always looking for ways to improve our performance. As a result, we have embarked on a review of Donations In Kind (DIK) operations to its their long-term sustainability and efficiency. It is essential all goods we deliver to developing countries are actually needed and not simply what we believe is needed, or shipments could end up being dumped. Our processes surrounding this will be examined and strengthened in coming months.

The take-up of Rotary Compassionate Grants (RACG) program by clubs across the country is gathering momentum. Notably, clubs are often raising much more than the dollar for dollar matching required. Currently, the average fundraising is \$1.58 for every dollar from the Dick Smith grants. If you wish to access these grants, can I suggest you start planning now or you may miss out.

*PDG Michael Perkins
Chair, RAWCS*

Rotary Australia Compassionate Grants



Funds raised with the help of a Rotary Australia Compassionate Grant (RACG) are financing a Pressure Mapping System to help wheelchair-bound people in North Queensland. The system measures pressure loading in the body, in this instance pressure loading through the buttocks, and saves huge costs on the healthcare system by preventing deep pressure injuries that can lead to long periods of hospitalisation and even death.

It is exciting to see the variety of programs put forward by Rotary clubs for compassionate grants. Since launching the program in February 2017, some 26 grants totalling \$223,392 have been approved, with clubs from all states participating.

Programs include support for families following critical accidents involving their key breadwinner, single mums needing to take extended time off work to be with seriously ill children (often far from home) and practical assistance for victims of family violence through women's refuges.

Additionally, projects have supported individuals and groups through the provision of technologically advanced programs to assist with health management and improved education. Two clubs are raising money to provide young wheelchair-bound people with the means to be independent or to be able to share in family activities more easily.

For more information, look through the RACG/RABS programs registered on the RAWCS website. Well done the 25 clubs registered so far. We hope to continue with this take-up so that the \$1 million donated by Dick Smith is quickly out in the community helping people in need.

*Bob Cleland
Rotary Club of Port Macquarie, NSW*

Liberty for all

Construction of a Liberty Swing for the disabled has begun after the successful application for a matching RAWCS compassionate grant by the Rotary Club of Deniliquin, NSW.

A Liberty Swing is an Australian-designed and manufactured swing, specifically devised for use by children and adults confined to wheelchairs. The swing will allow individuals with mobility issues to integrate into social activity within a community park setting where they would otherwise have to watch from the sidelines.

"A Liberty Swing gives a disabled user the feeling most Australians take for granted – the sense of freedom and joy," Zena Wahanui, manager of Kurrajong Waratah, Deniliquin, said. "The people we support have not been able to have this sensation and sensory stimulus for many years, if ever.

"We currently have seven people in wheelchairs, one using a walking aid and many others with physical limitations in our care. The swing will bring benefits to their mental wellbeing and physical conditions. The same can be said for many others like them with other service providers and schools in surrounding communities."

The swing is devised to blend in with other playground and park equipment and will enable the non-disabled to also participate.

The endeavour is a joint project of the Rotary Club of Deniliquin, the Lions Club of Deniliquin, the Soroptimists Club of Deniliquin and the Deniliquin RSL. The swing is being installed at Deniliquin's RSL Park.



The Liberty Swing, constructed at RSL Park in Deniliquin, NSW, will bring benefits to the mental wellbeing and physical conditions of disabled users in the area.

The group has already obtained a \$20,000 grant through the Edward River Council's Stronger Communities fund, enabling the purchase of the swing itself. The money from RAWCS will fund installation, lockable fencing, concreting, placement of a soft fall area and shade sails. The total cost of the

project is calculated at \$47,600.

"The matching grant from RAWCS has been invaluable to enable the project to proceed and come to fruition," David McPherson, of the Rotary Club of Deniliquin, said. "We have already received an enormous amount of positive feedback from the community."

New RAWCS projects over last quarter

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