

UNITE FOR GOOD

Rotary Rowville Lysterfield



NEWSLETTER 24, JANUARY 20TH 2026

Rotary meets

weekly at

Tosaria's Café

**60 Henderson Rd
Rowville**

Tuesday 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm
start

Meetings are hybrid unless
indicated otherwise

[Zoom meeting link](#)

Visitors are warmly welcome

Contact :

President Bob Morris

0416105326



Satellite Club meets at Tosaria's Café

Alternate Thursdays at
7:30am

Contact :

Chair: Kevin Harrison

0419919011

Home Club of
DGN Murray Wilson
PDG Daryl Moran



This week's meeting - Kate Watkins

We had the pleasure of meeting Kate Watkins and her beautiful assistant Kramer, at the meeting this week. Kate was invited to speak by Glennys who has worked with and been friends with Kate for 22 years. Kate's husband Ian, was also in the room, and enjoyed seeing Les after quite a few years....they went to High School together in Traralgon. What a small world!

Kate's association with Seeing Eye Dogs Australia goes back to 1974, when she received her first dog. Kramer is Kate's eighth dog, as the working life of these specialist animals is only 7-8 years.

Kramer was one of eight puppies in the litter, with only 4 remaining in the program after 12 months, as the puppies are very stringently monitored for health and behaviour and removed if found to be unsuitable.

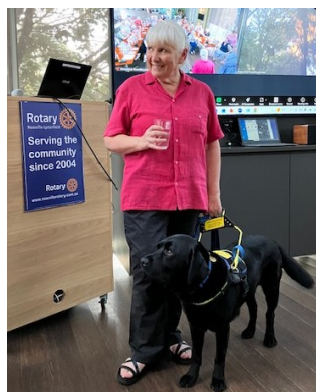
Kate gave us a thorough overview of the various stages in the life of a seeing eye dog from conception through to retirement and the processes that go into the making of a wonderful dog such as Kramer.

Kramer was bred by Seeing Eye Dogs with his parents both being Labradors. All the puppies in his litter were given names that begin with the letter "K". There are a large number of puppies born every year, so they go through the alphabet many times. After 5 years, names may be reused.

During the first 8 weeks, the puppies do what puppies do but are monitored by staff from day 1. They look for signs that may rule individual puppies out of the program e.g. medical issues, aggression, timidity. At the 6 week mark they are given a comprehensive medical assessment and weed out the dogs that don't make the cut. These dogs have to be the best of the best. Other assistance dogs are bred for many reasons, helping people with Diabetes, Hearing loss, PTSD. But Seeing Eye Dogs are trained to look out for cars. They are handpicked to keep their handlers safe.

At the 8 week mark, the dogs are ready to go off to their puppy carers. Their responsibility is not to teach the dog to guide but to care for it and teach good manners at home, to toilet train and to socialise the dog by taking it to a variety of settings e.g. shopping centres, theatres, public transport. At anytime during that first 12 months the dog could be removed from the program. At this stage the decision is made whether to use the dogs for breeding or for working.

If chosen for working, the dog goes to school and learns all the guiding side of things- turning left and right, finding doors, finding lifts etc. When Kate visited Knox Hospital recently, she just had to ask Kramer to find the path and he was able to take her up the path, around the corner to the front door and to the reception desk.



The dogs learn about traffic and to stop if a car is approaching. They learn to take the handler to the kerb and stop. They also learn to look up and make sure that they avoid anything that might be overhanging the path. The dogs learn a total of 33 guiding commands in addition to all the basic ones they have already learnt like sit, stay and come. They continue to be scrutinised for any problems. At 16-18 months Seeing Eye Dogs start looking for a person to match to the dog. (Continued on p.4.....)



MUFFINS ROSTER

February Muffins	Kaye, Mary, Corinne, Heather & Bob
February Muffins	Marg, Fiona, Pete & Sue, Glennys & Howard



Dates and delivery details will be confirmed soon

PROGRAM

Date	Registration	Chair	Setup and Production	Program
JANUARY- Vocational Month				
27th January	Marg	Heather	John W Jenny	Catherine Jenkins—Financial Planning
FEBRUARY- Peace Building and Conflict Resolution				
3rd February	Ian	Jeff	Jenny Kevin	TBC
10th February	Robyn W	Marg	Kevin Daryl	Luke Vesey - Challenges in the Trucking Industry
17th February	Corinne	John P	Ian Alan	Mark Jones— Sheldrick/KOCH
24th February	ROTARY COMMUNITY CLUB VISITS			
MARCH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene				
3rd March	John W	Jenny	Ian Alan	Days For Girls Project
10th March	Kaye	Alan	Jenny	Mark Jones - Borneo Orangutan

UPCOMING CLUB DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SUN 1st February - Makers and Bakers Market - Rowville Community Centre

SUN 15th February—International Chair Event - ZOOM

WED 18th February - Free Viewing of “Clue” at the 1812 Theatre - sign up list out soon



FIRST MARKET FOR 2026



Makers and Bakers Market at the Rowville Community Centre, Fulham Road Rowville.

SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 1st
9am—2pm

Markets will operate on the first Sunday in February, March and May. There is no market in April as it is Easter Sunday. Please check rosters and add your name if you are able to help out.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16QvHXSGDYayD5DYgq0mZkKUC-rNe3MLA/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=108019844417789794781&rtpof=true&sd=true>

NO MEETING 24TH FEBRUARY

Please note that there is no meeting on Tuesday 24th February. Instead President Bob has asked that members attend a meeting at another Club in our Rotary Community Group.

This is an opportunity to meet other Rotarians and see how other clubs operate, exchange ideas and network. It is hoped that members will be able to share their experiences at a later date.

It was suggested that members get together in small groups of 3-4 and maybe travel together to the meetings.

Heather has compiled a list of all the clubs with contact details so that you can contact the club to organise your visit. She will send via email shortly.

ERROR IN LAST WEEK'S NEWSLETTER

Please note that the Chinese New Year Fundraiser advertised in last week's newsletter is not associated with the RC Springvale City. Apologies for the error.

Kate Watkins Continued from p.1.....

It is so important to match the dog to the specific needs of the handler. Kate for example, wants a dog with pace. She wants a dog that doesn't just do routine, a dog that is keen to work and go to lots of different places. At the 18-20 month mark there will be an invitation to come and meet the dog and take it for a walk. Kate likes the trainers to stand back and let her find out if the dog is right for her. She wants to see the dog responding to her and not looking for reassurance from the trainers. In early October 2022, Kate made the decision that Kramer would be her next dog.

Two weeks of training together followed in her own area, doing a lot of work on public transport and in big shopping centres as well as the city, where there were lots of people. But this training is overseen by a trainer and is still quite formal, all the while being watched.

Once the paperwork to take the dog was signed, Kate was ready for the next step which was spending the next 6 months training Kramer to work for her. She would take him out on a train to places he'd never been so that he could learn new and different places and do different things without having anyone interfering with the process. In this way, she built an incredible bond with the dog. They are great mates, a great team that can resolve any issues that may come up from time to time.

These dogs are working dogs and need to work. Kate recounted the story of her previous dog that she had during Covid. Unfortunately, with all the restrictions, they were unable to be out and about. After 6 months when they were able to get out, the dog had become scared of the various noises. He became more nervous as the weeks went on, and Kate began to fear for her safety. The dog was retired and went to live happily with his puppy carers in Bendigo. When Kramer gets to 9, 10 or 11 years he will also be retired.

Kate thinks that Guide dogs will become obsolete in maybe the next 20-30 years and AI will take over. She has a pair of Meta glasses which are Ray Ban sunglasses that have cameras built into them and can be voice activated. She can answer her phone from them, read an Audio Book and listen to the radio. When out shopping, she can ask the glasses which shop she is standing near. The other day she asked them to read the junk mail to her. She has used them to identify items in her pantry and to read the information boards at Flinders Street Station. Obviously, over the coming years, this AI will be further developed and refined for a better user experience.

The dogs learn very quickly that when they have their harness on, it's time to work. Kate demonstrated this at the end of the night with a few of us by taking Kramer's harness off....what a transformation!! He was friendly and engaged with us, sniffing and licking and wagging his tail, just like any other dog. He particularly enjoyed the smells on Andy R's shoes and gave them a good lick. Upon putting the harness back on, Kramer stood still at attention at Kate's side, ready to work. Due to her fitness and age she thinks she will have one more dog in her lifetime.

We thank Kate for her inspirational and informative presentation. Many of us found out many things about this outstanding program which changes the lives of people with vision loss in so many ways. Thank you.

FOR YOUR ATTENTION

We have been asked to run a BBQ for the Bocce Club Open Day on Saturday 7th March. President Bob would like an indication of those who may be able to assist. It is likely to be similar hours to the market, possibly 8:30am-2pm so would require a couple of shifts.

Bob noted that this would be the day after the first Friday BBQ at Bunnings on 6th March.

The BBQ would probably do egg and bacon rolls early, followed by sausages until close and be the usual prices that we charge, with all monies raised coming back to the club.

Please let Bob know ASAP if you can assist on the day so that he can decide if it is feasible.

CLUB APPAREL

Kevin will be putting a clothing order in the next day or so. If you would like to order anything - shirts, polos, aprons, please let him know ASAP as this will save on delivery charges.

Member news Snippets.....



MEMBER BIRTHDAYS JANUARY

7th - Jeff

15th - Rajeev

24th - Marg



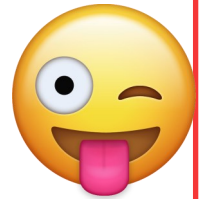
Some happy little vegemites ready for the meeting.

Marg and Ian are now on the tail end of their holiday in Sri Lanka. They have been having a fabulous time.

A highlight a few days ago was going out on Safari and seeing 3 Leopards which is highly unusual. Apparently, seeing one is usually lucky!

Marg commented though, that neither she nor Ian have ever been so glad to get back to their accommodation due to the "absolute lunatic" of a driver they had!

Sounds like they will never complain about the drivers in Melbourne, ever!!!



BUNNINGS BBQs

Next BUNNINGS BBQ Fri 20th FEBRUARY

Last Friday the BBQ team were looking forward to another successful Bunnings Sausage Sizzle. Unfortunately, that wasn't to be. The gusty wind kept them on their toes on several occasions but eventually things got very unsafe when the gazebo was pushed about a metre back from its starting position, even though it was weighted down. Thankfully, Murray's Superman powers helped him grab the rail at the top and Andy quickly grabbed one of the side poles whilst Corinne ran inside to get some help! The decision was made to pack up. The Bunnings team were very generous and paid for the sausages, 30 in total, that were cooked and still cooking. These sausages were then given to team members and then the general public whilst the packing up continued. As well as that, Bunnings also gave us a \$100 Gift Card. The profit from the couple of hours was \$230.31. Many thanks to Bob, Heather, Andy R, Murray and Corinne and also to Gary, Kaye and Cheryl who had volunteered for the afternoon.

Another very successful BBQ on Saturday with the team well and truly run off their feet, resulting in a massive profit of **\$2398.00!!**

Many thanks to the coordinators, Bob and Heather and the wonderful team of volunteers Alan, Robyn L, Robyn W, Murray, Gary, John W, Sharon, Ayanthi, John P, Mary, Glennys and Howard. Bob did many extra trips to the supermarket to buy more sausages, onions, bread and drinks. A mammoth effort by all concerned and great to see so many of our newest members joining in.

\$6388.48

The total profit from the December and January BBQs.
What a wonderful result!! Now, some projects to spend it on!



<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yZ2CCLKH5cvbJSV1ZpT46xjpsngO9Ir1BXYB6B5axeo/edit?usp=sharing>

INTERNATIONAL CHAIR Event

President Bob received the following email earlier in the week re an International Chair Event via Zoom. All are welcome to attend. Please see the details below.....

“You’re warmly invited to join us for our upcoming Zoom get together on **Sunday, Feb 15, 2026 at 10:00am**, where we’ll be coming together to share ideas, insights and a renewed sense of purpose on our International Service front. These gatherings are always richer when voices from across our community are 'in the room', and we’d love to have you with us. The more the merrier - please feel free to spread this invitation across your Club membership - previously, we've even had groups get together at one home to zoom in!!

We will be hearing about projects which are known and loved as well as new projects which will be far less familiar, so there will be something for everyone.

To attend, please register via the Zoom link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/SAQJ1v3WSoioNkYPVnNH9g#/registration>

Once registered, you’ll receive your personalised Zoom access details.

If you’re unable to attend on this occasion, we completely understand. In that case, please send a brief apology by email to the organiser at international@rotary9815.org.au, so we can keep our records up to date.”

Please register or apologise by Thursday 12th February.

Cheers

Janne Speirs

DISTRICT 9815 CONFERENCE 13-15 MARCH, 2026



FULL CONFERENCE including GALA DINNER - \$340 pp
(Includes a green Polo Conference Shirt)



If you have not booked as yet and have any questions, please get in touch with Heather, who will be happy to help.

Venues for the Club Dinner on the Friday night as well as breakfast on both mornings have been organised. Thanks to Jeff, who organised this on a recent holiday in Tasmania.

<https://rotary9815.org.au/page/district-conference-2026>

Let's support our members....



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The Knox Business Network Satellite club
of the Rotary Club of Rowville- Lysterfield.
www.knoxbusinessnetwork.com.au
Email: knoxbusinessnetwork@gmail.com
President: Kevin Harrison 0419 91 90 11
Secretary: Dominic Scuteri
Treasurer: Neil White
Vice President: Fiona Johns

*Proudly involved with
the Knox Business Awards*



Meeting timetable for the rest of the year:

January	29	July	2, 16, 30
February	12, 26	August	13, 27
March	12, 26	September	10, 24
April	9, 23	October	8, 22
May	7, 21	November	5, 19
June	4, 18	December	3 Finish for the year

Come and join us at Tosaria's @ 7:30 AM
and expand your business
and also make a difference through **Rotary**

Let's support our members.....



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CONTACT DETAILS

Club website: <https://www.rowvillerotary.com.au/>

District website : <https://rotary9815.org.au>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Rowville-Lysterfield-171446576246728/?ref=bookmarks>

2025-2026 BOARD MEMBERS

<i>President</i>	Bob Morris	<i>Secretary</i>	Heather Morris
<i>Vice President</i>	Murray Wilson	<i>Treasurer</i>	Neil White
<i>President Elect</i>	Andy Round	<i>Immediate Past President</i>	Jenny Moran
<i>President Nominee</i>	Marg Vesey		

2025-2026 COMMITTEE CHAIRS and OTHER ROLES

Community Service Chair	Marg Vesey	Program Committee	Bob Morris Rajeev Wadhwa
Youth Service Chair	Max Williams	Facebook	
International Service Chair	Alan Lunghusen	Website	Andy Round
Environment Chair	Gary Forrest	Newsletter	Corinne Baillie
Vocational Chair	John Williams	Rowville Secondary College Council Rep	Rajeev Wadhwa
Foundation	Neil White	On-to-Conference	Heather Morris
		Rowville Lysterfield	Jenny Moran
		Community News	
Membership	Kevin Harrison	Social Convenor	Kaye Sharman
Club Protection Officer	Bob Morris	Muffin and Soup Roster	Kate Kidd
Makers and Bakers Market	Bob Morris	Art Show Chair	Jenny Moran
BBQ Coordinators	Ian Vesey Marg Vesey		
War Memorial Project Chair	Daryl Moran		