



Bulletin #45, 3rd June 2024

President Greg Byers Secretary Catriona Jarman Treasurer Peter Holland

Next meeting is at The Royal Hotel at 1830 for 1900 hours on 17th June.

Duty Rota

If you cannot fulfill your duties please arrange someone else and inform Pres.

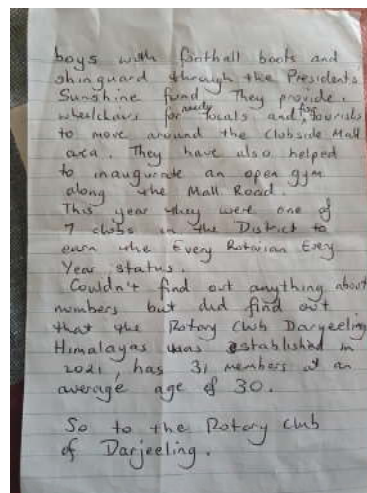
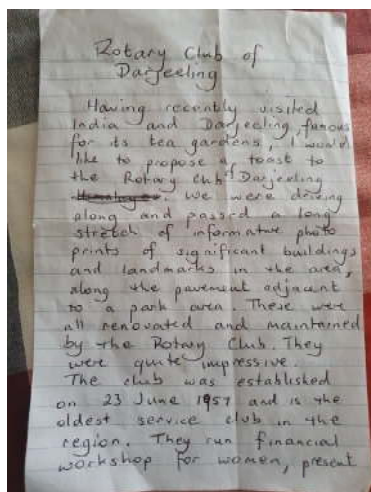
Date	10th June	17th June	24th June
Guest Speaker	Royal Birthday weekend No Meeting	Mark Dosser President Elect Plans and Hopes for 2024-2025	Surprise Night
Chair		Peter Holland	Greg Byers
Greeter		Paulette	Dave Freeman
Loyal Toast		Kathy Mills	Mark Dosser
Cashier		Matt.	Catriona Jarman

Invocation ALL

*For Good Food, Good Fellowship and the Opportunity to Serve through
Rotary We Give Thanks*

Chaddy introduced John Keffe as Chairman to get the meeting underway.
John welcomed everyone and we all said the Invocation.

Next Fiona gave the toast to King and Country followed by the toast to the RC Dajeeling.



Contact us at PO Box 80, Seymour. 3661, or Seymour@rotary9790.org.au

or call the Secretary (Catriona) on 0419372481

Upcoming Events			
<i>Month</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Organiser</i>
June	16	Community Market	Mark Dossor
	29	Change Over Luncheon	
July	21	Community Market	Mark Dossor
August	18	Community Market	Mark Dossor

John then introduced and welcomed Bob Singh owner of Caffeine Bistro, Seymour Subway, Smokin' Joes and lots more we are to find out about. John then introduced our President Greg

Greg apologised for not being involved since the 70th Anniversary and wanted to thank all that attended and especially those that helped to create the event and make it what it was. Catriona, Jane, Mark, John and Elliot had special mentions. Thanks everyone for your efforts!

Greg then mentioned that Mark Dossor has huge shoes to fill, lol!

Greg asked members to try and get to some or at least one of the external Changeovers or the District Changeover for the experience.



Greg mentioned about the membership fees going up to cover costs, we are currently \$7 short per person covering Rotary International/Insurance/Rotary Down Under costs.

Finally Greg told Bob Singh he needed to be funny or try to be funny to engage us all. He then handed back to John.

John called for reports:-

Catriona mentioned our Changeover and that she needs responses from members soonest!!

Fiona said that the 3rd Term was when the Environmental Writers Award was held and she asked if anyone has any ideas for the "Topic Question" for the students to respond to, to pop it through to her via text or email.

2021 topic was How can we improve our environment

2022 topic was What changes have happened in our environment

2023 topic was What Impact has plastic had on our environment

RYPEN District Youth are yet to confirm that dates will be in September.

Still waiting on Confirmation of Mock Interviews to occur in September

Junior Community Award participants are on track. A couple have fallen off but that was to be expected.



John then asked for the raffle to occur with Samantha winning the Wine and Viv Beaumont winning the Chocolates. We then had fellowship whilst meals were served.



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After dinner John introduced Bob Singh from Caffeine, Smokin' Joes, Subway plus many and varied other businesses including a proposed Theatre and bowling alley in Tallarook Street.



Bob explained that he has never spoken to a group before but he was pleased to be here in front of people that had built this country. Pay our taxes, are good citizens etc it is his pleasure to speak to us.

Three weeks before Black Saturday Bob arrived in Australia with his family. They went to his sister's home in Toorak but he didn't like it there with big homes with one or two people. He was the son of a farmer and wanted to be on the land. He brought Subway in Seymour 15 years ago and even though it is hard to get rentals now Bob says it was hard back then also. He was told about Bernie Smith having a few homes and after speaking to him he was able to settle in town. He had been able to create a platform to start but two weeks later Black Saturday occurred and everything was shut. Bob stated that he had gone down on the train the day after Black Saturday, everything was still burning. The losses included horses, animals and people, it was hard to see. It made his losses of his closed new business seem insignificant.

Bob was able to open the doors to his business one month later and he received a three month order from Puckapunyal which helped him get on his feet. Five years later he brought another Subway in Shepparton, three weeks after that he brought his third one.

Bob decided to try farming. He bought a 970 acre property in Loxley from Graham who had had a sheep farm on that property for over 50 years. Bob asked Graham what the source of water was and Graham replied "GOD". Bob noticed that Graham seemed very calm. Graham asked Bob if he knew how farming works here? The bank was asking about the rainfall in 2015 and he was told 32 inches on average. That year the rainfall was 12 inches. Bob was still learning about stock levels, he had about 1500 lambs coming and he had no grass or feed. He had to sell off stock and of course it was a bad time to do that and it was sold at a loss.

He looked at land to grow the feed he needed around the Echuca/Moama/Deniliquin area and ended up with 7500 acres. They didn't need to worry about water as they had irrigation and underground water....

That year that area flooded destroying the crops put in. They were only able to salvage about 2000 tonnes but that still did not cover costs. He sold the stock and sold the Loxley Farm.

The following year he planted 6500 acres of barley and 1000 acres of wheat. This time there was no water he had to buy it they got 80 bales of hay that year. He decided they needed to leave the farm. He had bought the property for 6.5 million and sold it for 7 million. The property sold in 2 days which made him wonder if he had done the right thing but he said the bank said take the money and get out of there.

That's when he decided to open Caffeine Bistro in Seymour, it was going really well and had a good response. 2 years later he opened another in Echuca, Moama and 2 in Mildura and then COVID hit....every shop was shut. Bills were piling up. They were then able to open and run as a take away so he had minimal staff in each shop and made enough to pay the rent.

After Covid there was no workers, it was extremely busy with 8 shops and the staff and family members he had were working 10 hours a day every day to get it all done.

Worker reliability is getting better now. He opened a shop in Yea after COVID. It got flooded, he says he will always remember the date Friday 13th October 2022.

He remembers 8.45pm Friday 13th October 2022 very well he was in his home in Alexander Street, he had been told that there was going to be a flood by some people and others said no that wont happen. He had his son watching the 4WD which was parked in Alexander Street and he told him to tell him if the water got near the wheels. His wife asked him to look out the back door towards Tallarook Street and he discovered the whole area was water. He said grab the dogs and the passports we are out of here. Bob said by the time they turned onto Whiteman street the water was above the wheels, by the time they turned onto Tallarook street the water was coming from Kings Park and it was hitting the windscreen. They managed to get near JC Footwear and the Police who were at the roundabout helped them to get their car onto dry land. They parked in Anzac Avenue and called friends who live in Darcy Street and that is where they stayed.

At this point the memories overwhelmed Bob and instead of him continuing along with his story he was happy to answer some questions.

Fred Sartori asked what the height of the new Theatre needed to be? Bob said 1.2 Metres off the ground and the cost for that would be around \$150,000.

Fred then asked where Bob was with the Theatre? Bob stated that the Town Planner was Russell Walker, he could engage the people or go through the process with the council and then it would go to the people which is what they did. A traffic report was done and a water storage report was done. The Plans are currently at VCAT with some objectors disagreeing with the Mitchell Shire who have given approval. They are objecting stating that it will create more traffic and hassle the neighbours. Bob stated that he has another block of land 8 or 9 metres away that he can create 85 more parking spaces.

Fred asked how long have you been dealing with this proposal and Bob stated 3 years.

Kathy asked Bob how many businesses does he now own and he stated 14 shops and 200 employees.

