

## OUR DISTRICT CHAMPIONS VISIT ALICE SPRINGS!

On the 12th March 2019, District Champions (DC): Melissa Hebbard (9790), Kerre Willsher (9500), Russell Marnock (9810) Sally Dell (9820) as well as DG 9820 Janne Speirs, packed their bags and headed for Alice Springs to join Lien Trinh, Kerry Kornhauser, and Melissa Brown (DC for 9500 Alice Springs). Self funded, they joined in the Santa Teresa Community Health Day, participated in the launch of the opening of the Community Laundry, dined with Rotary Alice Springs and attended the Close the Gap Conference.

*"The trip to Santa Teresa was wonderful, it was great to see so many organizations working together in health promotion. I was amazed at how this settlement has improved since I visited there in the 1980s. And so many options were revealed at Conference".* **Kerre Willsher**, District 9500 Champion

*"The Alice Springs trip was a revelation! As District Governor of Rotary District 9820, I accompanied my 'Trachoma Champion' on this venture. The day at Santa Teresa was wonderful and showed how committed the local community is to ensuring eye (and general) health, The Conference, while covering all aspects of eye health was also very valuable, particularly in terms of some of the much improved statistics on blindness and so on. A very worthwhile and valuable time away".* **DG Janne Speirs** (D9820)

## LAUNDRY OPENS IN SANTA TERESA COMMUNITY

Great news - Thanks to Rotary, Santa Teresa have a community laundry. A special thank you goes to the Rotary Victorian Multi-District Conference for thanking their guest speakers with a gift donation to EndTrachoma by 2020. And the donation has contributed greatly to the laundry.

The Laundry was officially opened on Wednesday 13th March in the presence of 5 of our District Champions. The total cost was just over \$13,000 and will provide many families with the facility to wash their clothes, bedding etc.

**Thank You to:** Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Christina Nixon APM, Brittany Arthur, John Soe, Edna Adan Ismail, Grace Forrest, Jason Ball, Sheree Marris, PDG Tim Moore, John Prendergast, PDG Jessie Harman, Brittany Kearney and RIPPR Stephanie Urchick for donating your time to support our project.

**Thank You to Rotary North Balwyn, members from Rotary Nunawading, and The Wateryard for your kind donations.**



**Great news: Papunya, N.T. is next to receive a Community Laundry facility thanks to Rotary!!**

## SANTA TERESA COMMUNITY HEALTH DAY

**AAACorp** were delighted to invite Rotary to host a Community Health Day and open the Community Laundry. Feedback from Susie Low (CEO) was: *"Please pass our absolute delight in having everyone visit today. Such a lovely group of intelligent and interested people. Thanks for bringing us together."*

It was certainly a day of partnering: Rotary District Champions, District 9820 Governor Janne Speirs, Jim Orchard and the Water Trailer, Ron Saint (Assistant Governor 9500), Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Health Promotion team, NT Health Trachoma Nurse, Milpa, NT Health Ear, NT Health Oral Health, NT Environmental, IEH, Australian Trachoma Alliance, Atyenhenge Atherre Aboriginal Corporation (**AAACorp**)- Traditional Craft Centre, Hair Salon and Coffee Van - all came together for a wonderful day at Santa Teresa. The feedback from our team was that they thoroughly enjoyed experiencing being in a community and observing first hand how Rotary can make a difference. Video testimonials from Janne Speirs and Sally Dell are on our Facebook.

The Water Trailer was certainly welcome in the heat of the day, and well used by both adults and children. It was noted that the music provided great ambiance.



Our Water Trailer and Milpa



Thank you Ron Saint & Melissa Brown for coordinating the BBQ & new laundry sign



Lesley Martin giving out footballs



Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Stand



## IEH CLOSE THE GAP FOR VISION CONFERENCE

The first ever **Close the Gap for Vision Conference** held in Alice Springs was co-hosted by Indigenous Eye Health (IEH) and Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) in March this year. EndTrachoma by 2020 was represented by Lien and District Champions Kerre (9500), Melissa (9790) and Russell (9810) to partake in the discussion. There was great emphasis on the importance of working together: government, non-government and communities. Trachoma is not only a health issue. It involves education and housing. Trachoma is everyone's business. A key outcome of the conference was the Alice Springs Declaration 2019, recognising that a healthy environment is essential for good health. Improving it will eliminate trachoma, and many other infectious diseases like Rheumatic Heart Fever and Otitis Media (middle ear infection), from Australia.

***"We cannot continue to rely on antibiotics to eliminate trachoma... our children need decent living conditions if they are to thrive"***  
- John Paterson - CEO AMSANT

## WA ABORIGINAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SAFE BATHROOM CHECKS

One of the important elements of this initiative is the aim of ensuring that as far as possible, Aboriginal people living in regional and remote WA have access to a safe, functional bathroom where adults and children of all ages can safely and effectively wash themselves – especially their faces. Regular and continuous facial cleanliness is key to the elimination and prevention of a range of hygiene related diseases including Trachoma which is currently in the National and International spotlight.

Many bathrooms in community homes are missing mirrors or the mirrors are placed too high for children to be able to see if their faces are clean and require washing. The *"Didya Wash Your Face and Hands"* message then potentially falls flat or is not possible when they are at home. The provision, installation and monitoring of mirrors in bathrooms is part of our initiative(s) around the elimination of trachoma. The initiative(s) falls within the National S.A.F.E. strategy and in particular the **F & E** which are **F**acial cleanliness and **E**nvironmental improvements. The checking for, installation and monitoring of towel hooks is also part of the attempt to ensure that as far as possible people can safely and effectively wash themselves, have their own towel and be able to hang it up in between showers/uses etc.

1000 mirror packs and >400 towel hooks were provided last year to be distributed to 48 at-risk communities in WA. A further request has been received for more mirrors, bath hooks, and now 10,000 colorful towels to assist their program.

### Did You Know?

- \* **Only 9%** of houses are electrically safe
  - \* **Only 7%** of homes have a working kitchen
  - \* **19%** of hardware failure is due to faulty products or installation
  - \* **Only 38%** of homes have a working shower
  - \* **73%** of hardware failure is due to wear & tear
  - \* **8%** of hardware failure is due to damage by residents.
- \*\*And whole communities must be repaired otherwise overcrowding can result in strain on the working hardware 'next door'.**



Conference: Interactive Basket Weaving Session

## Where are we now? TRACHOMA FACTS AUSTRALIA, 2019

### We are seeing less trichiasis



This painful and potential blinding condition of turned eye lashes reduced by over half among Aboriginal Australians living in remote communities between 2010 and 2015, from 2.1% to 0.9%

### We are seeing less!



Trachoma was eliminated from mainstream Australia 100 years ago, and since 2008 it has dropped from over 20% of children in at-risk remote Aboriginal communities, to just under 5%



### We are seeing less at-risk communities

There has been a steady decline in the number of communities at risk of this infectious disease, from 244 classified communities in 2010, to 130 in 2017, as reported by each of the states and territory

### Was trachoma introduced to Australia through settlement?



It may have been introduced, but a couple of studies suggest trachoma could have pre-dated European settlement. Either way, it should not exist as a problem in our country today

### We need to improve the living standards of our least advantaged communities



Trachoma disappeared from many countries not because of regular antibiotic use, but because of improved hygiene and sanitation



### Strong collaboration is needed



Health, housing and education working together will ensure that families have the life education they need to build strong futures

### Clean faces will eliminate this disease completely

WWW.ENDTRACHOMA2020.ORG.AU





## PORTABLE, POTABLE WATER TANK PROJECT

One of our next projects is a functional vehicle that can be used to wash faces, and hands and provide drinking water at sorry and business camps. Portable water tanks would enable good hygiene to be practiced at large community gatherings, significantly reducing the risk of trachoma and other infectious disease outbreaks. The trailers with water tanks mounted are estimated to cost around \$18,000 + GST each. They have been designed in consultation with Neil Ross (RC Alice Springs and Director at Ross Engineering Alice Springs, a trusted engineering firm delivering projects in Alice since the 1940s), Don Reed (GP Papunya) and Stephan Rainow (Nganampa Health), and would be purpose built to ensure robustness and appropriateness for the environments in which they will be used. It is intended that hygiene is a clear purpose built into the designs. This includes a sink, storage for soap and towels, and a mirror.



We expect that access to drinking and cleaning facilities at large community gatherings will reduce the spread of infectious disease, reduce trachoma infection rates and aid the prevention of trachoma in the APY lands. This will be monitored using trachoma prevalence data.

## "HOMELAND STORY" - FILM NIGHT FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

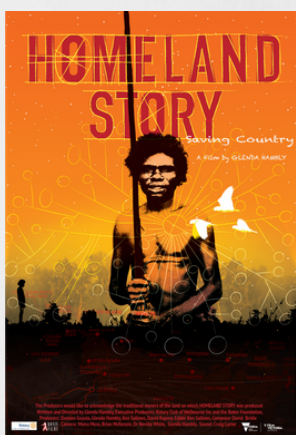
**This is a Rotary supported feature documentary about a remote North-East Arnhem Land Indigenous Community \*\*\*\*\* Host a screening in your local cinema to raise funds for our project and the Donydji community!**

The film traces the Donydji community's transition from 1960's nomadic life to the digital age. It shows their struggle to maintain their traditional culture while joining the modern world.

This is a unique story of cross-cultural co-operation between, Dr Neville White, a genetic anthropologist who went to Donydji in 1974 to research a PhD. In effect, he never left. It documents his deep friendships across three generations and commitment to helping the community remain on their ancestral land. In the early 2000's, he persuaded Rotary to support his Vietnam Veterans and local men, to build desperately needed housing and a school.

This Rotary-Donydji partnership is still in place today.

*If you want to learn more about Homelands, connection to country, the work of Rotary and its powerful, positive impact, you'll love this film.*



Help end trachoma  
by drinking great  
wine.  
What could be more  
satisfying?



## USED STAMPS - LAST CHANCE FOR TRACHOMA

The sale of Used Stamps, funding EndTrachoma by 2020, will end 30th June - the same time that Carrol Farmer from 9810 will retire after 28 years of trimming and selling stamps.

### Stamp Out Trachoma

**LAST CHANCE: Collecting ends 30th June '19**

Collect used stamps from Work, Schools, Universities, Hospitals, Medical Clinics, Council Offices etc- and the sale of the stamps will go to trachoma till 30-06-19! **Last chance to action!**

**Raised so far: \$17,000+**

Remember every stamp helps!

Rotary Districts of Australia | EndTrachoma by 2020  
Building Healthy Communities

Please send your used stamps today to:

**Rotarian Carrol Farmer - retiring 30th June '19**

Apt. 423/1286 High St, Malvern. Vic. 3144

email: ericfarmer@bigpond.com

Phone: 03 9500 0140



Thank you for donating 3,000  
mirrors and 228 towel hooks



Thank you for  
donating  
200 towel hooks

