



HOUSE NEWSLETTER

2020 Spring Edition

Official Newsletter of Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Inc.

Our Purpose: Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Inc (GRCH) provides safe, supportive and affordable accommodation for patients (and their families) undergoing cancer treatment and other specialist medical services at the Latrobe Regional Hospital. The House is operated on a non-profit basis utilising volunteers. GRCH is a registered charity and all donations are tax deductible.

HOUSE INFORMATION UPDATE:

Welcome to the Spring Edition of Gippsland Rotary Centenary (GRCH) House Newsletter. It is to be hoped that as spring blooms we will see some reduction of the restrictions we have been dealing with for many months now.

As I mentioned in our Autumn Edition we are in uncharted waters as we all deal with the COVID-19 virus. The Operations and Governance Sub-committee and the Operations Manager have met monthly, to consider and review the protocols we have in place to ensure we keep Gippsland Rotary Centenary House COVID free. Volunteers are only attending on an as needs basis in small numbers and all meetings other than staff meetings are being conducted by Zoom.

GRCH is currently preparing for our annual financial audit conducted by Ritzers with the assistance of local accounting firm RGM. This is generally a particularly busy time as we collect the necessary reports required by the auditors to demonstrate our compliance with all relevant legislation. The process this year is particularly more complex as we need to demonstrate what influence COVID-19 has had, and may be likely to have, on our business in the immediate future.

On the good news front, it is fabulous to now have the western border of our property fenced. The contractors have done a great job installing a Colorbond fence, once they could finally access the area to do the job. That side of the property has been particularly soft and "boggy". I believe Committee of Management member and landscaper Ray Scheffer has already surveyed the fence and is proposing to establish landscaping to blend the fence into what is a very pleasant site overall.

A big thank you to those volunteers who have been ironing at home for us, that is certainly commitment. Also, a call out to those volunteers venturing out to the facility to carry out urgent maintenance and gardening jobs to keep the House looking and feeling like home.



Finally, the most important shout out to our wonderful full and part time staff who maintain the extremely high standard of accommodation guests have come to expect in these demanding and stressful times. The Committee of Management and I congratulate staff for their diligence to stay safe and well to ensure we can provide our very much needed "home away from home" facility.

Look forward to seeing you at GRCH on the other side of this horrible isolation.

Dave Swainsbury
Chairman, Committee of Management
Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Inc.

Screens create privacy for guest

A project by the District 9820 West Gippsland Cluster of Rotary Clubs, the erection of screens was completed in May this year. The Rotary club of Drouin coordinated the project with assistance from the Rotary Clubs of Bunyip-Garfield, Hazelwood, Koo Wee Rup-Lang Lang, Moe, Morwell, Trafalgar and Warragul.

Guest rooms in stage three facing south previously looked across our drive and into units belonging to the Latrobe Regional Hospital. With the screens in place our guests can enjoy the additional privacy and the afternoon light coming into those rooms.



GRCH Operations Manager Carol Crewe was grateful for the work undertaken by Rotarians saying "Guests can now look out their windows without looking into the units behind Centenary House. I am sure the hospital staff are happy not to be on show anymore too."

The plan now is to grow plants up the screens to create a peaceful backdrop to the rooms at the rear of the House.

Pictured below are some of the members from the Rotary club of Drouin displaying their social distancing skills (prior to mandatory masks).



Staff are still smiling behind the masks



Operations Assistant Tania Whitehead and Operations Manager Carol Crewe showing off their masks for a Facebook photo.

Like all other Victorians, Centenary House staff have had to get used to wearing masks while outside of the home over recent months. While you cannot see their faces, rest assured the same friendly smiles are still there behind the masks.

"Knowing how important the masks are for the safety of guests makes wearing them more tolerable" says Operations Assistant Tania Whitehead, adding "though It is still hard when you cannot give someone a smile to brighten their day".

GRCH staff have opted for bright coloured material masks over the less personal disposable ones, hoping that they will help make them appear more inviting and friendly.

GRCH Commemorative Tree Upgraded

In 2016 when GRCH celebrated the 10th anniversary of our opening, a tree was planted by then Chairman Ken Peake to commemorate the milestone. With Ken standing down from his role of inaugural Chairman in 2019 it was decided by the GRCH Committee of Management to update the garden and the plaque to reflect his long term dedication to GRCH.

The plaque now has the following wording: "This commemorative tree was planted by Ken Peake Inaugural Chairman, GRCH Committee of Management on Thursday 6th October 2016 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of Centenary House.

Ken Peake OAM, was the Assistant Governor of the District 9820 Latrobe Cluster of Rotary Clubs. In 2003 he led the Latrobe Cluster in the planning for Gippsland Rotary Centenary House as a project to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Rotary International. Ken served as Chairman of the Committee from 2003 to 2018 and was instrumental in the establishment and development of the three stages of Gippsland Rotary Centenary House. This garden and tree recognise 15 years of committed leadership by Ken Peake."



Pictured above: The upgraded garden with the new plaque honouring Ken Peake's long term contribution to Centenary House.

development of the three stages of tree recognise 15 years of committed

COVID-19 UPDATE

Gippsland Rotary Centenary House has continued to operate throughout the Covid-19 crisis. As an essential service we have worked hard to keep our guests, staff and volunteers safe while providing accommodation to Gipplanders needing to attend Latrobe Regional Hospital for oncology or specialist medical services.

Staff have continued to comply with all strategies and requirements as stipulated by the Victorian Government and have worked with Latrobe Regional Hospital staff to ensure our guests are impacted as little as possible.

It has been a difficult time at Centenary House with a limit on the attendance of volunteers while Stage 3 restrictions were in place. Centenary House relies on volunteers to undertake a variety of tasks and without their input, staff have struggled to keep up with all the jobs needing to be done. "Our volunteers are amazing and without their help we could not keep the charges affordable for all guests" said Operations Manager Carol Crewe "We pride ourselves on maintaining the facility to a very high standard of cleanliness, which of course is even more important at this time, and our volunteers contribute to our success in this"

Another difficulty for Centenary House has been the reduction in income over the past six months. Due to restrictions we have had to cancel all our fundraising events since February, combined with the drop in donations and the ban on elective surgery this has meant our income has gone down significantly. We have been fortunate to receive the Federal Government cash flow bonus and some operational grant support but we hope to be able to safely hold fundraising events in the near future.

If you have any queries about staying at Centenary House please contact staff on 03 51711600.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO READERS: We can save money by e-mailing this newsletter to **you**.

Please contact Carol with your e-mail address at **carol@centenaryhouse.org.au** or return the slip on the back page to Gippsland Rotary Centenary House.

Charitable Trust Gives Again

The Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust was established in 2002 by local businessman and philanthropist Keith Chenhall to support worthy causes in the Traralgon area. Mr Chenhall was born and bred in Traralgon and in 2014 received an Order of Australia Medal "for service to the community of Traralgon" before passing away aged 90. The trust ensures that his community spirit lives on.

Gippsland Rotary Centenary House is extremely grateful for the long term support provided by the Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust. Past generous contributions have funded maintenance works, replacement of worn or broken equipment and furniture as well as purchase of new items. The latest support of \$5,000 has again enabled us to replace and upgrade various items throughout the house.



A new sofa bed for our family room

A new sofa bed in our family room provides a comfortable seat during the day and an extra bed for family or carer at night.

Other rooms were furnished with new lamps and bedside tables. Having the bedside tables in our guest rooms on wheels means our staff and volunteers can more efficiently clean the rooms.

Our staff were also pleased with new equipment such as a leaf blower to help keep paths clear, an additional portable stick vacuum and our new vacuum mop. This equipment not only makes cleaning of guest rooms quicker, we can also keep public areas clean with less disturbance to our guests.



Our staff love the new vacuum mop and bedside tables on wheels mean they can get the cleaning done quicker.

Upgraded items in our Stage 1 kitchen



Old convection microwave ovens which have been in our Stage One kitchen since we opened were also replaced with new microwaves and an air fryer.

"Having a well maintained facility is an essential part of providing a peaceful, caring home away from home environment for our guests. We are extremely grateful to the Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust for their ongoing support" said GRCH Operations Manager Carol Crewe.

Centenary House gets fenced in!



Pictured above: The new fence seen through our gazebo.

Pictured below: Behind our gazebo, the line of Cyprus trees that were removed from the property border and the new fence on the western boundary.

September saw the completion of a new fence along the western boundary of Gippsland Rotary Centenary House. Installation was carried out by Ron Armstrong and his team from Central Gippsland Fencing.

The fence provides protection from the wind which had become an issue after Latrobe Regional Hospital removed a line of large Cyprus trees along the boundary.

“The wind had become such a problem that we even had some plants being blown over in our new gardens before they had chance to take root” GRCH Operations Carol Crewe advised, also adding that the installation of the fence had to be delayed until after the Stage Three expansion was finished.

Our hard working grounds team wasted no time; volunteers were onsite the following Monday to start to prepare the ground for our new landscaping. Committee of Management member and landscaper Ray Scheffer has developed a plan for the new garden and we cannot wait to see the finished area.

At the back of the property the new fence has been tied in with existing fencing to provide a storage area for our grounds crew to keep their equipment neatly tucked away.



Introducing the Committee of Management “Diane Wilkinson”

Diane is currently the Deputy Chair of GRCH and Chair of the Operation and Governance Sub-committee.

Diane was an original member of the Centenary House Planning Committee established in 2003 and has continued to be a member of the GRCH Committee Management as the organisation has progressed from the original concept planning to the development of the facility it is today.

Diane has lived most of her life in Moe, apart from a six-month period in Brisbane in the early 1970s.

With over 30 years' experience in the health and community service sectors, Diane has held a number of positions within organisations across Gippsland before moving to undertake private consulting work in 2011.

Her previous appointments have included CEO at Gippsland Women's Health and roles at Gippsland Southern Health Service, Latrobe Regional Hospital and Latrobe Community Health Service.

Diane has qualifications across the areas of governance, business management and health, including a Master of Public Health and the Australian Institute of Directors (AICD) Company Directors Course.

A member of the Rotary Club of Moe for 18 years, Diane has held various positions including President, Secretary, Treasurer, International Service Committee Chair, Foundation Committee Chair, Membership Committee Chair and general Board Member.

Diane has a strong interest in and passion for improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities in the Latrobe Valley and across Gippsland and is a member of the Latrobe Health Assembly.

She has been an active community member over a number of years and, further to her current community associations, has also previously been a Board member of Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault, a Trustee with the Latrobe City Trust and as a presenter on Gippsland FM Community Radio.

Diane says “she feels very privileged to be part of such a wonderful organisation that provides much-needed support to people from across Gippsland (and beyond) as they deal with significant health issues and is extremely grateful for all the support received from the community that enables us to continue to do so.”



GRCH Committee Member
Diane Wilkinson.

Upcoming Events to support GRCH (save the date!)

Refer to our facebook page or website for more information about individual events.

- ◆ GRCH Chat & Chew—Sunday 11th April 2021, Grand Junction Hotel, Traralgon (TBC)

Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Newsletter

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To update or remove your details from the Gippsland Rotary Centenary House mailing list please complete and return this section to :

Gippsland Rotary Centenary House
39 Valley Drive
Traralgon VIC 3844

Centenary House Updates

- If you would like to know what is happening at Centenary House you can keep up to date by following the Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/Gippsland-Rotary-Centenary-House-206290322733733/>

- Or you can go to our website and read the News & Events page to keep up to date.

<http://www.centenaryhouse.org.au/>

- To make an accommodation booking or for all general enquiries please contact Centenary House staff (Monday - Friday 09.00—16.00)

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