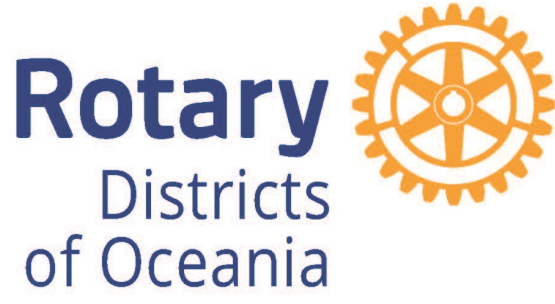


ANNUAL REPORT 20-21



The ROMAC Story



Rotary Oceania
Medical Aid
for Children

ROMAC (Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children) commenced in March 1988 out of the actions of an Australian Rotarian who, with a group of surgeons, visited Lambasa in Fiji. They found the child mortality rate as high as 25% in some places. They quickly identified that lack of medical and surgical facilities and skills for children of the island nations in Oceania, was a major cause. Rotary faced the challenge to assist an 18-year-old Fijian girl whose right leg was threatened if immediate surgery was not performed.

During the next four years, eight children were brought to Australia for major, often lifesaving, surgery. Soon 20 Australian Rotary clubs were caught up in the success of each case and assisted in various ways. ROMAC established five regions representing clubs in the west, east, south, north and centre of the country.

A New Zealand region was formally established in 2004 and treated its first patient, from Vanuatu, in December 2005. The inaugural New Zealand region representative was Trish O'Reilly and Dr Max Morris, the first New Zealand Medical Director.

It was a slow and steady process to promote the objectives and raise awareness of ROMAC in the New Zealand region, but the number of patients treated in New Zealand has risen to more than 25 patients per year.

ROMAC in New Zealand and Australia enlists assistance from medical experts, hospitals, nurses, physiotherapists, pathology and

radiology services, airlines, sponsors and other supporters. Today ROMAC is providing surgical treatment to around 50 children from Oceania every year – we are making a huge difference in their lives.

Mission Statement

ROMAC provides surgical treatment for children in Australia and New Zealand from developing countries from our Pacific region in the form of life giving and/or dignity restoring surgery not accessible to them in their home country.

Objectives

- *Provide hope and restore dignity to transform a child's life*
- *Provide the best possible surgical and medical expertise*
- *Engage Rotary and the community at all levels to fund and support the ROMAC cause*
- *To maintain and improve the quality of the management process and ensure high quality governance of the ROMAC project.*

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Harold Sharp OAM Chairman

Chairman's Report

The last twelve months has been the most challenging year in ROMAC's history. As far as I am able to determine, I am the only Chair of ROMAC who has been unable to bring a single patient into either Australia or New Zealand in any 12 month period, due, of course, to the COVID-19 pandemic and the decision by the Federal Governments of both countries to close their borders to any potential patients.

Thankfully, none of our patients was needing urgent surgery or procedures. However, as we await the decision to lift restrictions, ROMAC now has a waiting list in excess of 40 children.

On a positive note, through the incredible hard work of our ROMAC Regional Chairs, together with their District Chairs, we were able, primarily via Zoom, to attend more Rotary meetings than in previous years. This outstanding effort by members of the ROMAC team saw a 17% increase in the number of clubs making a donation to ROMAC this past year.

Mention must also be made of the hard work from our Communications Chair, PDG Gina

Growden who regularly communicated with our database through our E-News and Social Media posts, updating members on our current situation.

The introduction of Tyrrell's wine offers also increased our income and helped add to our donation database.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to my fellow Board members, Regional Chairs, District Chairs, the Operations Team, the Medical Advisors and Consultants, the Communications and IT teams and, of course, our many hard working volunteers for your dedication and commitment to ROMAC.

ROMAC is still able to claim we are all volunteers, and have no paid staff!

**Harold Sharp OAM
Chairman**

Our front cover child, Vincent, was a very sick 2 month old baby when he arrived in Canberra from the Solomon Islands in July 2019. Sixteen months later he returned home a happy and healthy toddler. Vincent's photo is courtesy of Canberra Times photographer Karleen Minney.





Dr Larry Roddick OAM Medical Director

Medical Director's Report

In presenting this report I will be presenting bad news (Covid influences) and good news (lower costs will allow more children to receive ROMAC funding).

COVID-19 has paralysed ROMAC's ability to bring children from the Pacific and Oceania for life-changing surgery. However this hiatus has given us the opportunity to improve some of our triage processes.

Triaging, of necessity, is a medical method of choosing those children who potentially will most benefit from the receipt of ROMAC funding which is most generously provided by Rotarians and their clubs; ROMAC receives no other funding.

It is imperative we aim to control our costs as cost-limitation allows more children to receive funding. During this past year we have been fortunate to have had hospital costs substantially reduced for ROMAC patients. We are most grateful to both Pat Conroy, federal shadow minister for the Pacific, and Hon Brad

Hazzard, NSW health minister, as they have assisted us to have a marked decrease in the costs for ROMAC patients in a NSW hospital. This reduction of roughly 60% will allow us to fund more children.

Not surprisingly, considering the past 18 months, we have a long list of children wishing to receive ROMAC assistance. There are well over thirty children hoping that ROMAC can fund paediatric (open-heart) cardiac surgery. Those children not needing complex cardiac surgery will receive precedence as a lower patient cost will allow more patients to receive ROMAC assistance. As well we have many non-cardiac patients hoping for our help .

All of us are looking forward to a post-COVID era when we are again able to bring children down for life-changing procedures.

**Laurence (Larry) Roddick OAM
Medical Director**

Vincent, from the Solomon Islands was treated in Canberra for a blockage between his oesophagus and his stomach. In his 16 month stay in Australia he had 3 major surgeries and countless procedures before he was well enough to return home.





Michael Carrigan
Treasurer

2020-21 Financial Report

I submit my report as Treasurer of ROMAC for the year ended 30th June 2021. This is my fourth and scheduled final report as treasurer as, in accordance with ROMAC by-laws, my term expires at the expiration of this year's annual general meeting. It has been both an honour and a challenge to hold the position of Treasurer, Company Secretary and Public Officer of ROMAC. I have enjoyed dealing with and getting to know some truly inspirational people along the way.

The overall result for the current financial year was a surplus of \$535,252 as compared to a deficit of \$102,752 in the preceding financial year. The surplus for the year can be attributed to the fact that, due to COVID-19, ROMAC has been unable to care for any children over the past 12 months. In addition, as a result of a resurgence in the stock market last year's "book write down" of \$84,053 on the entity's share portfolio has been reversed with an increase in share valuations of \$108,903.

Donations from Rotary Clubs within Australia have again been impacted by COVID-19 with total contributions received of \$277,472 as compared to \$278,843 in the preceding year. A total of 128 clubs including 25 "first time"

donors made financial contributions. In the two preceding years 134 (2019.20) and 176 (2018.19) clubs supported ROMAC. Other donations and bequests totaled \$147,404 as compared to \$132,459 in the 2018.19 year. ROMAC is indebted to those individuals and organisations who contribute year after year.

In summary total donations etc. were \$424,876 as compared to \$411,302 in 2019.20 and \$560,211 in the 2018.19 year.

Excluding the increase in the value of the entity's share portfolio (see comments above) income from investments this year totaled \$55,379 as compared to \$68,790 in the preceding year. The major contributors to the decline in investment income included the current low interest environment and a decline in the level of dividends received. Current indications are that there should be a slight increase in income from investments in the 2021.22 financial year. Indirect costs for the year totaled \$47,513 (2019- \$87,804).

The ROMAC Board Operation Committee's long term stated desire is that income from investments should be sufficient to cover the organisation's indirect (that is non-medical) costs. Having regard to the current state of the

2020-21 Financial Report (contd)

Australian economy and, in particular, the “low interest” environment the outlook of the investment climate indicates that this objective may need to be revisited.

Medical costs this year totaled \$6,393 as compared to \$419,215 last year. As mentioned above there were no “active” cases over the past 12 months – due to travel restrictions in both Australia and New Zealand. Medical costs are expected to increase significantly this year with a current case being treated in New Zealand and more anticipated. There are a significant number of cases on ROMAC’s waiting list awaiting clearances.

As I have reported previously while a great deal of effort is put into assessing cases prior to their acceptance and many of the medical costs are discounted either by the treating hospital or by the treating medical specialists providing their time on a pro bono basis there is an ever-present danger that, due to complications or unforeseen circumstances, there will be a “blow out” in one or more cases which could have a significant financial

drain on reserves. The ROMAC Board is focused on minimizing the risk of this occurring.

In finalization I would like to thank all those clubs and individual Rotarians and non-Rotarians who contributed to the support of ROMAC during the past 12 months. The continued and increasing support of Rotary Clubs and Rotarians is critical to the ongoing operations of ROMAC

Michael Carrigan

Michael Carrigan

Treasurer – ROMAC: (Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children Limited)

*Maureen was the **500th** patient to be treated by ROMAC. From the Solomon Islands, she had a 1.5kgm non-malignant tumour removed from her neck at the Children’s hospital in Randwick, Sydney.*





Gina Growden
Communications Chair

Communications Report

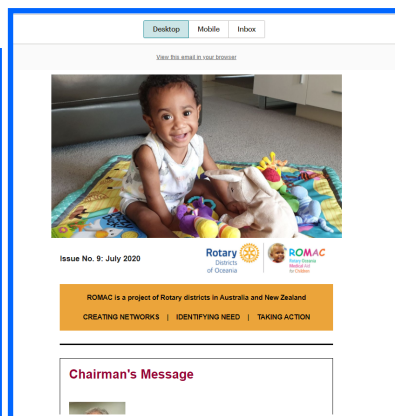
The ROMAC Communications team consisting of Maggie Alexander, Michele Ellery and Gina Growden is responsible for all aspects of marketing, communications and public relations. The team produces the Annual Report, brochures, promotional flyers, Rotary Down Under advertising and articles, website and newsletter content and social media stories.

Keeping our supporters informed about patients and relevant activities within ROMAC encourages ongoing commitment and financial support which is vital for our survival, and despite no ROMAC patients being treated in either Australia or New Zealand this past year, every effort has been made to engage with the 6,000 plus people on our database. Bi-monthly e-newsletters and Chairman's updates have been circulated with a resultant increase in the number of Clubs seeking presentations from a ROMAC representative. Our

10 minute video provides our volunteer speakers with a vehicle for imparting a consistent and informative message to Clubs and this has been well received. Thanks to our volunteers around Australia and New Zealand, well over 100 presentations, many via Zoom, have been carried out this year, far exceeding the number that would normally take place in a face-to-face environment. Feedback received indicates that many of these clubs had not had a presentation on ROMAC during the past three years.

COVID-19 and the consequential lack of ROMAC patients has meant little social media activity has taken place, but this will increase when borders re-open and newsworthy stories are generated.

Obtaining national media exposure is always a challenge for organisations like ROMAC, but thanks to District 9705 ROMAC Chair, Sandra



Communications Report (Contd.)



Northern Region Chair, Wayne Litherland delivering a ROMAC presentation via Zoom—2020-21 Style!

Goldstraw, we were very fortunate to have extensive coverage of Vincent’s story on his departure home to the Solomons following his 16 months in Canberra. The Canberra Times features his story in both their printed paper and

their on-line edition—where it stayed for an entire week. The story was picked up by the ABC who also featured it on their website and invited ROMAC Chair, Harold Sharp, to be interviewed on their Sunday evening national radio Grassroots program. Such national coverage is invaluable in promoting the vital work carried out by ROMAC and generating financial support.

The Communications committee is grateful to the many Rotarians and Friends who have supplied stories and images for our use in the past year. These contributions are the cornerstone of ROMAC’s marketing and communication strategies and are essential tools for encouraging active engagement and ongoing commitment from our supporters. Thank you!

Gina Growden
Communications Chair

A screenshot of the ABC News website. The top navigation bar includes 'ABC NEWS', 'Sydney 15°C', and various news categories like 'Just In', 'Watch Live', 'Coronavirus', etc. A 'COVID BLOG' banner is visible. The main article is titled 'Donated surgeries in Canberra save Solomon Islands baby born with detached oesophagus' by Tahlia Roy. Below the title is a photograph of a smiling young child. To the right, a 'Top Stories' sidebar lists several other news items.

The ROMAC Management Team



Role	Name	ROMAC Email	Club
Chairman	Harold Sharp OAM	chair@romac.org.au	Gosford City
Medical Director	Dr Larry Roddick OAM	medical@romac.org.au	Charlestown
Operations Director	Judy Holland	operations@romac.org.au	Redlands Bayside
Director	Susan Wakefield OAM	marketing@romac.org.au	Lower Blue Mountains
Treasurer	Michael Carrigan	treasurer@romac.org.au	Buderim
Secretary	Jim Prokhovnik	secretary@romac.org.au	Albert Park
Communications Chair	Gina Growden	communications@romac.org.au	Terrigal
IT Support	Richard Woodburn	itsupport@romac.org.au	Randwick
Communications Coordinator	Maggie Alexander	editor@romac.org.au	North Ryde
Alumni & Patient Evaluation	Bob Richards (Mar-Jun)	evaluation@romac.org.au	Sutherland
District Governor Rep (Zone 8)	Adele Hughes	adelerotary@gmail.com	Discovery Coast
District Governor Elect Rep (Zone 8)	David Mayne	david.mayne@wesmold.id.au	Port Macquarie
Operations Manager (New Zealand)	Sue Smith	opsnz@romac.org.au	St Johns
Regional Chairs			
Northern D9550, D9570, D9600, D9630, D9640, D9650	Wayne Litherland	northern@romac.org.au	Rockhampton South
Eastern D9670, D9675, D9685, D9700, D9710	Bob Richards (Jul- Mar) Helen Ryan (Mar- Jun)	eastern@romac.org.au	Sutherland, Nelson Bay
Southern D9780, D9790, D9800, D9810, D9820, D9830	Jill Oliver	southern@romac.org.au	Alfredton
New Zealand D9910, D9920, D9930, D9940, D9970, D9980	Glenys Parton	newzealand@romac.org.au	Tauranga Sunrise
Central D9500, D9520	Brett Dalton (Jul- Mar) Ian D'Arcy Walsh (Mar-June)	central@romac.org.au	Burnside, Adelaide
Western D9455, D9465	Bob Cooper	western@romac.org.au	Kwinana

Fundraising 2020-21

With COVID-19 restricting Clubs' ability to fundraise, the number of events conducted during 2020-21 in support of ROMAC was limited. However, some special functions were held resulting in much-needed funds to prepare ROMAC for the expected influx of patients once the borders reopen.

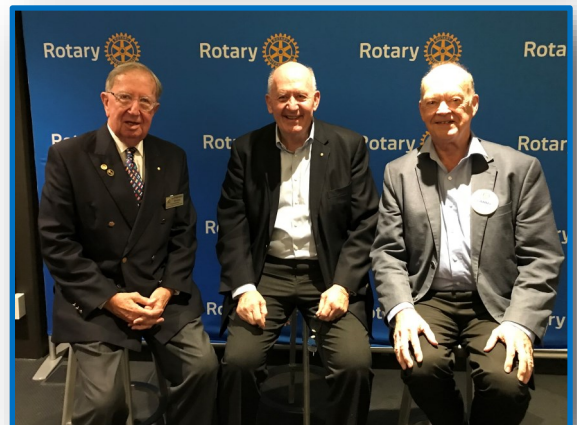
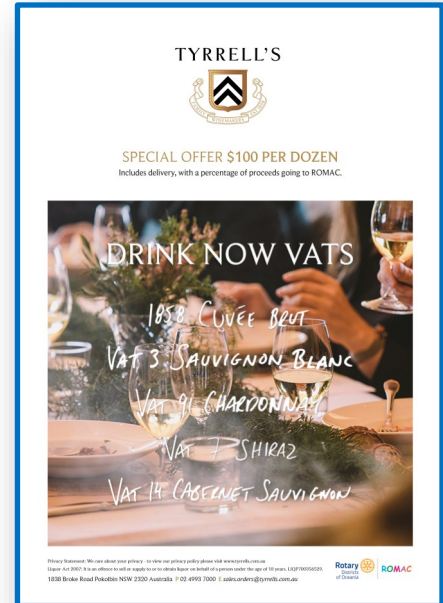
Thanks to Tyrrell's wines, three successful 'Drink Now Vats' wine offers were promoted via email and were well supported.

Southern Region, under the direction of Regional Chair, Jill Oliver, held a series of special dinners and fundraisers, including trivia evenings and 'drags' bingo nights.

The Rotary Club of Charlestown held a very enjoyable and successful fundraising dinner in June, at which the Hon Sir Peter and Lady Lynne Cosgrove were special guest speakers.

And the thirteenth annual quiz night organized by the Rotary Club of Caloundra was again a great success.

Our sincere appreciation goes to those Clubs and ROMAC volunteers who conducted special fundraising events during the year. We know how difficult this has been, particularly in our current COVID environment, and appreciate the time and effort required. Thank you!



Thanks to our Sponsors ...



The Bosin Twins from Bougainville, were conjoined twins who were successfully separated at Melbourne's Children's hospital thanks to ROMAC. They are now in their mid twenties and are both university graduates!



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