

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Rotary
Districts
of Oceania



ROMAC
Rotary Oceania
Medical Aid
for Children



10 FAQ's about ROMAC

- 1** Q. **Does ROMAC receive Government funding?**
A. No. ROMAC relies entirely on the generosity of our individual and corporate donors, the support of Rotary Clubs and District Governors – and the very prudent management of our funds.
- 2** Q. **Does ROMAC have any paid employees?**
A. No. ROMAC is 'staffed' entirely by volunteers who use their own office facilities, drive their own cars and pay their own miscellaneous expenses eg. telephone accounts.
- 3** Q. **Why does ROMAC bring children to Australia and New Zealand instead of operating on them in their own country?**
A. Because the necessarily complex surgery, paediatric intensive care and rehabilitation required to remedy disfiguring birth defects like encephalocele or life threatening cardiac problems, is simply not available in small nations in the South West Pacific, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.
- 4** Q. **What is an encephalocele?**
A. An encephalocele is an extremely distressing congenital condition where part of the infant brain bulges out of the skull to form a sac-like protrusion in the middle of the face.
- 5** Q. **What other medical conditions do ROMAC children present with?**
A. Serious trauma eg burns, which require re-constructive surgery and skin grafting. It is a long, painful process often requiring multiple re-admissions.
- 6** Q. **Why do so many children present with burns?**
A. Because cooking over an open, ground-level fire pit is the norm in many villages. Sadly, toddlers often fall in, with disastrous and painful consequences.
- 7** Q. **Once a child in need has been identified how are they brought to Australia or NZ?**
A. It is logistically complex to bring a baby or indeed an adolescent, from a remote village to a leading teaching hospital for treatment. Visas and passports need to be obtained, international airfares booked and pre-paid, availability of hospital costs and surgeons ascertained, internal transport organised, home hosting arranged... it is incredibly time consuming... and all offered pro bono by volunteers.
- 8** Q. **Does ROMAC need more volunteers?**
A. Yes. There are many ways of supporting ROMAC. You might offer your vocational skills, home-host one of our little patients and their carer or be a volunteer driver.
- 9** Q. **How can I find out more about ROMAC?**
A. Visit our websites - www.romac.org.au or www.romac.org.nz or check out our Facebook page <https://facebook.com/ROMACFRIENDS/> for regular updates.
- 10** Q. **How can I donate?**
A. That's easy. All the details about donating are on page 4.

Thanks for asking and for your support.



Rob Wilkinson Chairman

Chairman's Report

It's been a great privilege to serve as ROMAC Chair for the past 3 years, and to have led one of the few Zone 8 multi-District projects - particularly one which is held in such high regard. ROMAC continues to do its business – saving children's lives. There are a good number of patient success stories this year, with many thanks to the Starship Hospital in Auckland for hosting a large proportion of those. Patient numbers are down from the 40-50 patients per year in the past with only 25 cases in 2018-2019. However, we should not underestimate the impact ROMAC has had on hundreds of lives – patient and extended family, carers, host families, Rotary Clubs, doctors, nurses etc. Saving the life of just one child is reason enough to keep us going!

There are a number of external factors affecting patient numbers which are beyond our control but the main ones are: the lack of available hospital beds in Australia and increased calls on the Rotary Club dollars for such causes as local disasters. Despite a deficit this year, we are still in a strong position financially, with solid reserves on hand to meet the occasional cost overrun due to complications with some patients.

For me, the highlights of the year include:

- The two patients from the Solomon Islands who went to Adelaide (Central Region) during the last week of this Rotary year for heart surgery. They were treated quickly for a minimal cost, went home after 12 days, and are now able to lead a normal life. This is a great boost for our Central Region Committee, who have not hosted a patient in many years and goes to show how easily we can affect the lives of children in need.
- The growing number of ex-patients who are doing well, for example, Roselyn Jatobatu who is studying medicine at the University of PNG and Ambassador Rosie Lotawa continues to regularly promote ROMAC at Rotary Clubs and Conferences.
- The meeting of the ROMAC Medical Panel in April which brought together many of the medical professionals and the ROMAC support team involved with our patients. Some positive outcomes are increased communication and smoother processes which will benefit future patients.

In addition, I am very pleased that our E-Newsletter and Facebook pages continue to receive great feedback and positively influence our public profile. I would like to thank the members of our Communications Committee who are retiring – Chris Joscelyne, Maggie Alexander and Ann Burleigh – for all their efforts.

The Board and Operations Committee have continued to function well and I thank all members for their contributions. Lastly I welcome this year's newcomers and thank them for their service – Jim Prokhovnik (Secretary), Carol Bourne (Operations Director), Jill Oliver (Southern), Larry Roddick (Medical), Bob Cooper (Western), Harold Sharp (Fundraising and Incoming Chair), Richard Woodburn (IT Support), Judy Holland (Operations Manager) and Bob Richards (Eastern).



Chair Rob Wilkinson thanks Gay Kiddle, Editorial and Operations Manager, Rotary Down Under, for allowing ROMAC to use the Board Room for the April Operations Committee Meeting.



Harold Sharp Fundraising Director and Incoming Chair

Fundraising Report

The ROMAC Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Past District Governor (PDG) Harold Sharp to chair the Board for the next term commencing September 2019. Harold serves on the ROMAC Board currently as Fundraising Director. His input of constructive ideas, and his careful attention to detail, has added tangible value to the effectiveness of the Board.

A member of the Rotary Club of Crows Nest, Harold is one of the most experienced Rotarians in Zone 8, a multiple Paul Harris Fellow and the recipient of the Rotary Service Above Self Award. Harold served as Chair of the House of Friendship Committee for the RI Convention in Sydney, for which he received the NSW Premier's Award for 2014.

PDG Harold is a Fellow of the Fundraising Institute of Australia (FIA) and he has served as a founding member of an advisory committee to assist the Chief Secretary of NSW in establishing the NSW Charities Collection Act 1991. He has served as Chair of the Macquarie Park Cemetery and Crematorium Trust and he is a former trustee of International House at the University of Sydney.

With his long experience and his commitment to leadership in not-for-profit enterprises, we are delighted that PDG Harold is undertaking the ROMAC leadership role.

In 2015, 17-year-old Roselyn from the Solomons came to Australia for a life-saving heart operation at the Sydney Adventist Hospital. Thanks to Dr Ian Nicholson and his team, she recovered well. In 2017 Roselyn graduated from her college Dux of Science and with 4 distinctions. In 2019 she began medicine at the University of PNG to follow her dream to practice cardiology.



Donate to **ROMAC**

Please support ROMAC, a project of Rotary Districts in Australia and New Zealand.

In Australia, donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible. Donate securely at www.romac.org.au or post a cheque and your contact details to ROMAC, PO Box 779, Parramatta NSW 2124 Australia. ROMAC will provide a receipt.

In New Zealand, donations of \$5 or more qualify for a tax credit. Donate securely online by PayPal quoting code "405 - ROMAC" as a reference at www.rnzwcs.org or <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/rnzwcs/share>. Or post a cheque and your contact details to RNZWCS (Rotary New Zealand), c/o PO Box 20309, Christchurch 8543 New Zealand. ROMAC will provide a receipt.



Larry Roddick
Medical Director

Medical Director's Report

It is an honour and privilege to present my first annual report as the Medical Director. Initially, I wish to thank our Chairman Rob Wilkinson, our Operations Director Carol Bourne and our former IT Consultant Barry Wilson. All three have provided significant assistance to support my progression into my role.

In April 2019, Rob Wilkinson organised a successful and highly productive one day "Medical Panel Meeting" at the Westmead Children's Hospital. Our Medical Advisors, Regional Chairs and Board members met with the Medical Consultants from the five countries from which most of our ROMAC children emanate. Our Medical Consultants are Ines Teodora in Timor-Leste, Gwenda Anga in PNG, Ram Raju in Fiji, Titus Nasi in Solomon Islands and Orelly Thyna in Vanuatu.

We gained a practical insight of the logistical issues confronting our Medical Consultants. Subsequently, the ROMAC referral process has been fine-tuned and enhanced. The day was so successful it is envisaged that we will schedule this type of meeting as an annual event.

We have recruited another three Australian paediatricians to Medical Advisory roles. Phillip Rosengarten in Southern, Ben Reeves in Northern and Nigel Stewart in Central have been appointed. All three are held in very high regard within the Australian paediatric community. We congratulate them, and we wish them well in their future roles with ROMAC. Michael Plaister, Has Gunasekera, David Croaker and John Stirling continue as NSW, ACT and NZ Medical Advisors.

I thank our former Medical Director Eric Horne and former Central Medical Advisor Alan McKinnon for their ROMAC input. Each has retired after long and dedicated volunteer service to ROMAC. We wish them both an enjoyable retirement.

The entire team acknowledges the long-term commitment to ROMAC of Michael Brydon, recently retired former head of Paediatrics at the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network. Michael's relationship with ROMAC has been wonderful and we are deeply grateful for his dedication to the welfare of ROMAC children.

Acceptance of a child for major surgery can occur only after many factors have been assessed. Our Operations Director, Carol Bourne, must dedicate a huge amount of time - from the receipt of each child's referral - to organising the child's medical management within Australia and New Zealand, and then their return home. All of us are extremely grateful for Carol's significant efforts. Also, we are grateful for the efforts of each ROMAC volunteer who plays a vital role in giving a ROMAC child the opportunity to experience best practice medical management in Australasia.

The Medical Panel looks forward to continuing the wonderful work of ROMAC in the coming year.



ROMAC Medical Panel April 2019





Michael Carrigan Treasurer

2018 – 2019 financial year

The overall result for the 2018-2019 financial year was a deficit of \$239,695 compared to a deficit of \$3,912 last year. This was due, in part, to a couple of significant factors: a reduction in donations and an increase in patient expenses. Donations from Rotary Clubs within Australia this financial year totalled \$403,097 compared to \$487,809 in the preceding year. A total of 176 clubs made financial contributions this year, down from 206. Among the donors were a number of “first timers”, which is encouraging. Other donations and bequests totalled \$157,114 compared to \$252,747 in the 2017/18 year.

In summary, total donations were \$560,211 compared to \$740,556 last year. While there are reasons for the decline (ongoing droughts in Eastern Australia, and, devastating floods, both of which required substantial financial support from Rotary Clubs), the reduction in total receipts of almost 25% is nevertheless deeply disturbing.

Income from investments increased from \$66,330 in the 2017-2018 year to \$98,247 in the current year. Contributing factors to the increase in investment income were an upwards movement in the value of the entity's share portfolio, a higher level of dividend payments and franking credits received.

Indirect costs for the year totalled \$49,640 compared to \$93,587 in 2017/2018. As a result of an increase in income from investments and a reduction in indirect costs, the ROMAC Operation Committee's long-term stated desire that income from investments cover the organisation's indirect costs has again been achieved in the current financial year. However, given the current state of the Australian economy, the outlook of the investment climate indicates the objective of covering indirect costs from investments may have to be modified.

Patient medical costs this year totalled \$848,313 compared to \$717,250 last year, an increase of more than 18%.

In my report last year I noted that: “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 will have a significant financial drain on reserves”. This year's results are a reflection of the above comment.

Finally, I would like to thank the Rotary Clubs, individual Rotarians and supporters of Rotary who contributed to ROMAC during the past 12 months. Your continuing and increasing financial help is of critical value to the ongoing viability of ROMAC.



One-year-old Resime from Vanuatu needed cardiac surgery to repair a ventricular septal defect, a hole in the wall separating the two lower chambers of her heart.

Her surgery at Starship Hospital in Auckland, New Zealand went well and Resime made a speedy recovery. Everybody noticed the amazing transformation from one cantankerous, grizzly little girl pre-surgery to a bubbly, delightful girl afterwards with bundles of smiles.



Carol Bourne
Operations Director

Operations Director's Report

From the initial request for assistance to the child's hospitalisation and safe return home post-operatively, it is critical that the best interests of the child are at the forefront of any decisions made by ROMAC. This is the responsibility of our Operations team.

2018/2019 saw 25 cases treated and completed. This figure is down compared with previous years. Sadly we are continuing to experience difficulty securing hospital beds in Australia. Despite this setback, we are still very appreciative of those who can support us. Please note that no Australian or New Zealand child has ever been disadvantaged by the admission of a ROMAC child to a hospital.

In Operations, the role of our Medical Director is pivotal to our success. I would like to acknowledge Dr Larry Roddick for his dedication, professional advice and support in this role.

I am delighted to report the appointment of Judy Holland to the role of Operations Manager. Judy assumes the responsibility for coordinating all patients' movements within Australia.

In April we held a productive Medical Panel Meeting at Westmead Hospital. On the back of this success, annual meetings are proposed. I would like to thank Michael Brydon, Westmead Hospital, Rob Wilkinson, Barry Wilson, Larry Roddick and participating doctors for their significant input.

I commend the untiring work our Regional Chairs undertake, not only with our established doctor and hospital coordination, but also reviewing opportunities for new medical clinicians and access to new hospitals. They work collaboratively with their District Chairs and committees to foster a dedicated team for the hosting and other needs of our patients and their carers during their stay in Australia or New Zealand, often for periods of weeks, and sometimes several months.

Our District teams consist of volunteer Rotarians who assist our patients with transportation to medical appointments, arrange interpreters and support and care for the child's accompanying family carer, liaise with host parents and generally provide the post-operative connection for our patients, including visits and social outings.

We are supported by caring medical professionals in the Oceania region including Dr Ingrid Bucens and Dr Ines Teodora from Timor-Leste; Prof John Vince, Dr Gwen Anga and Craig Brouggy from PNG; PDG Wayne Morris, Dr Rooney Jagilly and Dr Titus Nasi from the Solomon Islands; Dr Orelly Thyna, Janet Kalpukai and Dr Richard Tatwin (including Don MacRaild OAM) from Vanuatu; Dr John Stirling, from Auckland's Starship Hospital, who undertakes clinical visits to Vanuatu; Dr Ram Raju from Fiji and many other doctors who have conducted clinics in the Islands of the Pacific, assist many children in being identified for life-saving or dignity restoring surgery. Also, we acknowledge and thank the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection personnel for their continued support and assistance to ensure visas are granted in time to meet critical surgery arrival deadlines. Likewise, we thank Immigration New Zealand.

We acknowledge the wonderful support of a number of companies such as Johnson & Johnson Medical, Conoco Phillips, IMED (Regional Imaging) in Darwin and Solomon Airlines who actively support ROMAC in several practical ways.

All these contributions provide ROMAC with the infrastructure to save the lives of less fortunate children in the Asia/Pacific region. These children are brought to Australia and New Zealand by ROMAC, with life-threatening problems that cannot be corrected in their own country.

ROMAC could not continue this good work without the support of Rotary Clubs and individuals in Australia and New Zealand through their donations. These enable us to continue organising and providing surgical treatment for these children, many of whom live in incredibly remote and disadvantaged locations.

Working together we can achieve remarkable outcomes.



Judy Holland Operations Manager

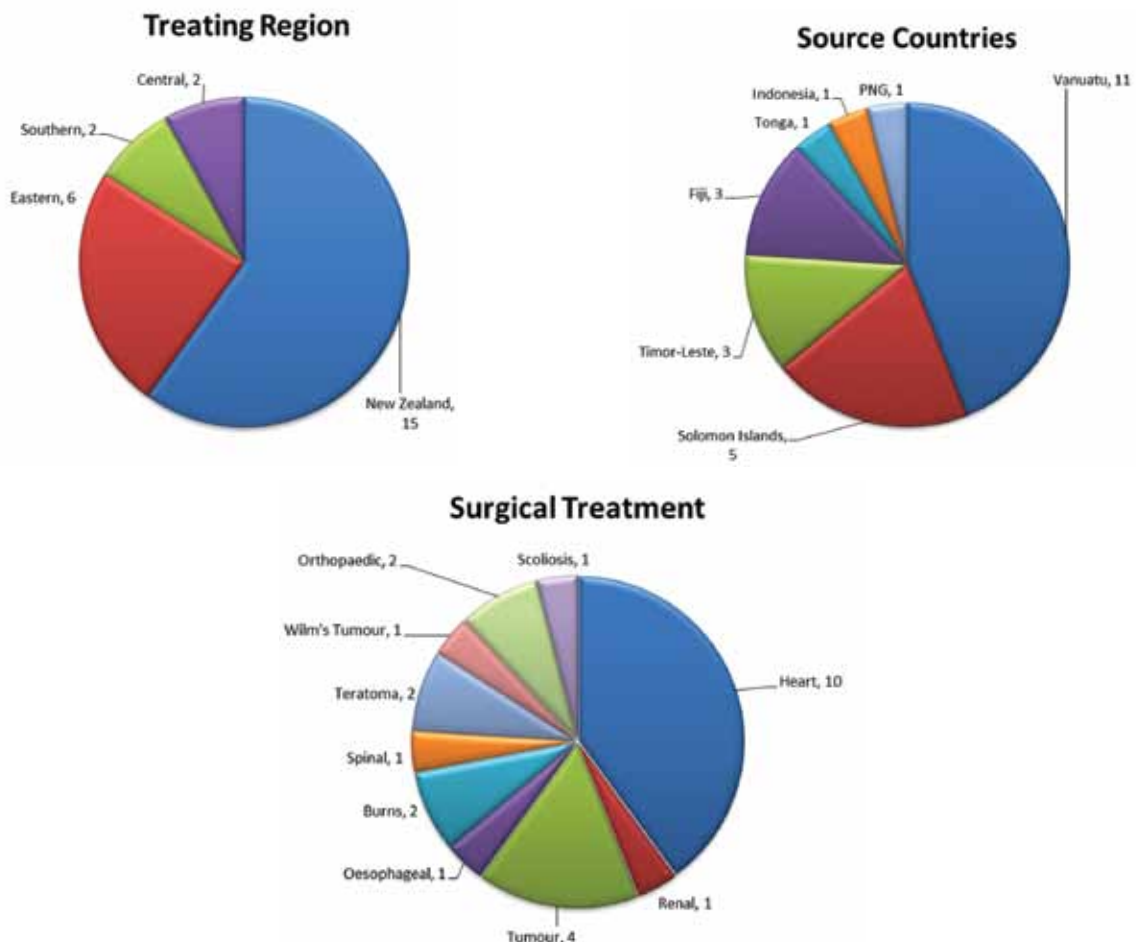
Operations Manager's Report

It is with great pleasure I present my first ROMAC report as Operations Manager. As a relatively new ROMAC volunteer, the opportunity to share the load, by arranging the logistics for patients from our Oceania neighbours, is appealing and rewarding.

It has been a steep learning curve, made easier by Carol, Operations Director, and the Australian Regional Chairs who have assisted my assimilation into ROMAC's operational structure. The ROMAC Electronic Health Records (eHR) database, a sophisticated resource that stores patients' personal and medical data while protecting their privacy, helps me greatly in my job.

My role covers administrative tasks including obtaining birth certificates, passports, medical reports, travel coordination, home hosting of patient next of kin, patient case tracking, reporting to the ROMAC Board and hospital liaison. Liaison with hospitals includes our commitment that no ROMAC surgical cases will displace surgery for Australian or New Zealand children.

I have attended ROMAC regional meetings where I have seen first-hand the magnificent input of ROMAC volunteers. Their contributions of time and effort are deeply appreciated. Thank you everybody for your service.



ROMAC success stories - Our patients

ROMAC Cases for Year 2018/2019

Name	DOB	Country	Region	Surgery	Status	Hospital	Rotary Club
Almas	2002	Eastern	Indonesia	Burns	COMPLETED	Westmead	North Ryde
Aseri	2014	Central	Solomon Islands	Heart	COMPLETED	Womens & Childrens	Salisbury
Emilia	2015	Southern	Timor-Leste	Wilms Tumour	COMPLETED	Royal Children's Hospital	Mt Eliza
Floyd	2017	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Heart	COMPLETED	Starship	Takapuna
Gaspar	2015	Southern	Timor-Leste	Tumour	COMPLETED	Royal Children's Hospital	Wandin
Georgina	2006	Central	Solomon Islands	Heart	COMPLETED	Womens & Childrens	Salisbury
Henry	2014	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Heart	COMPLETED	Starship	North Harbour
Ilandia	2018	Eastern	Timor-Leste	Teratoma	COMPLETED	Canberra	Belconnen
Jerry	2002	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Tumour	COMPLETED	Starship	New Lynn
Kevin	2004	New Zealand	PNG	Tumour	COMPLETED	Starship	Remuera
Lisa	2002	Eastern	Vanuatu	Scoliosis	COMPLETED	Westmead	The Hills Kellyville
Mariana	2017	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Heart	COMPLETED	Starship	Henderson
Mathilda*	2017	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Heart	COMPLETED	Starship	Manukau City Sunrise
Mathilda*	2017	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Heart	COMPLETED	Starship	Manukau City Sunrise
Mavis	2018	Eastern	Solomon Islands	Teratoma	COMPLETED	Canberra	Gungahlin
Mohammed	1998	New Zealand	Fiji	Burns	COMPLETED	Starship	New Lynn
Mourine	2003	Eastern	Solomon Islands	Tumour	COMPLETED	Randwick	Five Dock
Rachel	2013	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Renal	COMPLETED	Starship	Birkenhead
Resime	2017	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Heart	COMPLETED	Starship	Downtown Auckland
Rifal	2017	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Spinal	COMPLETED	Starship	Takapuna
Torika	2018	New Zealand	Tonga	Oesophageal	COMPLETED	Starship	Milford
Verzinette	2003	Eastern	Solomon Islands	Heart	COMPLETED	Westmead	Springwood
Vilikesa	2008	New Zealand	Fiji	Heart	COMPLETED	Starship	New Lynn
Vinna^	2012	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Orthopaedic	COMPLETED	Braemer Hospital Hamilton	Hamilton East
Vinna^	2012	New Zealand	Vanuatu	Orthopaedic	COMPLETED	Braemer Hospital Hamilton	Hamilton East



Verzinette



Lisa



Rui

ROMAC Case List notes:

- Mathilda *Case 1
Arrival 26-10-2018
Departure 08-12-2018
- Mathilda * Case 2
Arrival 01-02-2019
Departure 03-04-2019
- Vinna ^ Case 1
Arrival 29-04-2017
Departure 12-12-2018
- Vinna ^ Case 2
Arrival 25-01-2019
Departure 18-04-2019





Glenys Parton

New Zealand Region Chair

The New Zealand region treated 13 children in the 2018/19 Rotary year and handled 15 cases. Two patients returned home for a brief period of time over the summer period before returning for further treatment in February. Treatments covered the spectrum of orthopaedic, cardiac, non-malignant tumours, renal, burns, neurological, oesophageal and dental.

The team has had a challenging year with two cases having outcomes requiring additional treatment and an extended time of stay in New Zealand that was not initially anticipated. Despite this, the Rotary host club families have continued to support ROMAC—unfailingly pulling out all stops to assist our families during their stay with us—no matter how long. This service is ably co-ordinated by Rotary Liaison team member Barbara Watt with significant input from Rotary clubs in D9910 and D9920.

Vinna (7 years old) is recorded as the patient having the longest stay for treatment. She returned to Vanuatu in April 2019, marking a milestone after close to a two-year stay in Hamilton, New Zealand, for orthopaedic treatment including a bone graft.

Sue Smith was appointed as our new Operations Manager mid-2018 following the resignation of our incumbent Ops Manager in June 2018. Two new members joined the team at the same time, to help with backup and roles across the region.

As part of a sustainability strategy, the New Zealand region has successfully delivered a training workshop in Santo, Vanuatu, in March 2019. This training was supported by funding from ROMAC, Rotary e-Club One and a global grant, as part of the on-going commitment to increase the skills of local health professionals in the care of children. The trainers were Kitty Bach, neonatologist, and Ros Gasparini, nurse educator, both of whom were from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in Auckland City Hospital. There were 24 participants; 8 doctors, 11 registered nurses, 3 midwives, 1 Emergency Paediatric Intern and 1 person working with children. Training was co-ordinated by Leigh Kelly with content that was based and built on the modules of the WHO Health Pocket Book.

The dedicated medical teams at our supporting hospitals and in our contributing countries go out of their way to assist and change the lives of the children ROMAC brings to them – for this we are very grateful.

Members of the New Zealand Regional Committee continue to work together to achieve the best outcomes for the children we treat and feel a sense of pride in being part of such a great Rotary project.

Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia o tatou mahi

Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.

Photos of ROMAC Patients in New Zealand provided by Bill Home, ROMAC NZ Region Committee Member.



Annisha



Floyd



Mathilda



Rifal



Jill Oliver

Southern Region Chair

The Southern Region successfully hosted two ROMAC patients during 2018/19 and, in a first, expanded our outreach into regional Victoria.

Gaspar (3 years old) from Timor-Leste was referred by Professor Michael Sullivan for immediate surgical intervention of a Germ Cell Tumour. Dr Michael Nightingale undertook the complex seven-hour surgery. Two weeks later Gaspar, who bounced back quickly, was ready to travel home. Gaspar was sponsored by Wandin Rotary Club and hosted by Carla Chung.

Emilia (4 years old) was a very sick, malnourished little girl from Timor-Leste. She was admitted under Dr Michael Nightingale for removal of a Wilms' tumour. Following surgery, Emilia underwent chemotherapy at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. The treatment necessitated a prolonged stay and we record our thanks to Inez and Geunter Steinbrecher and Carmel and Graeme Chester for hosting Emilia, and to Sponsor Rotary Club Mt Eliza.

We are hopeful that successful outcomes such as these will give the broader Victorian community a chance for greater engagement with ROMAC patient care and support.

Thanks to all Southern District Chairs for their patience and guidance during my initiation into ROMAC and particular thanks to Gavan McIntyre and Colin Byron for capably looking after our Melbourne admissions. Thanks also to outgoing District Chairs Katherine Baverstock and Alan Samuels and welcome to incoming District 9800 Chair, Betty Kitchener.



Inez Steinbrecher and Emilia
with her father Thomas



Gaspar with Gavan McIntyre



Brett Dalton

Central Region Chair

Following a three-year hiatus, I am pleased to report that Central Region had a wonderful year with two cardiac patients treated and four more in the pipeline.

Dr Gavin Wheaton, Head of Paediatric Cardiology at the Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide, identified several children from the Solomon Islands who needed lifesaving surgery to treat Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA). Aseri (4 years old) and Georgina (13 years old) attracted great media coverage for ROMAC. Georgina's mother said "now that our prayers have been answered, we can start to rebuild our home and our family".

The publicity generated by the admission and successful treatment of these children has resulted in renewed interest from several South Australian Rotary Clubs. Central has capitalised on this with presentations to Clubs and the District 9520 Assembly. Central is now well positioned to fulfil its aim of increasing ROMAC awareness and fund-raising as well as consolidating and building our Committee for the future.



Georgina



Aseri



Bob Cooper

Western Region Chair

Disappointingly, things remain quiet on the western front. The Perth Children's Hospital is up and running after several delays but is yet to admit a ROMAC patient. As the recently appointed Western Region Chair, I'm pleased to report that contact has been made with the Western Australian Minister for Health, the Honourable Roger Cook, MLA, and we will continue to liaise with him and his Department, on behalf of ROMAC.

With the co-operation and support of District Governors in D9455 and D9465, I'm also hopeful that renewed interest in ROMAC will be generated and recruitment of enthusiastic Rotarians to District Chair and Committee positions will be successful.



Wayne Litherland

Northern Region Chair

Northern Region did not directly receive any ROMAC patients this year. We have, however, been extremely busy behind the scenes supporting patients and carers in transit to other centres e.g. to Adelaide for treatment. This assistance ranges from friendly welcomes and reassurance to the provision of suitable clothing and amenities. Our small but enthusiastic teams in Darwin, Brisbane, Dili and Honiara help to ease the way through Customs, and International to local flights. I warmly acknowledge the ongoing support of Solomon Air.

I'd also like to acknowledge the Sunshine Coast Rotary Clubs in D9600 who combine to run an Annual Trivia Night, which this year, raised over \$20,000. I also record our thanks to other Clubs and individuals for their financial support and all those who supported ROMAC in the Northern Region in so many other ways. I do need to single out Hilda Reaburn (D9640) and John Lee (D9600) who are retiring from their respective ROMAC roles; their contribution to ROMAC over many years has been exemplary.

I am delighted that Dr Ben Reeves, a paediatric cardiologist from Cairns, has accepted the role of Northern Region Medical Director. Hopefully, his professional input will help to facilitate patient admissions to our local hospitals.



Bob Richards

Eastern Region Chair

It was a steady year for the Eastern Region with six children admitted for transformative treatment. With local pressure on Sydney and Newcastle children's hospitals, Canberra punched above its weight by taking three of the six cases. D9710 Chair Sandra Goldstraw and her team performed exceptionally well in making this possible.

Mourine (14 years old) from the Solomon Islands celebrated her 15th birthday in Australia with her mother Elika and the teams from D9685 and D9675. This followed the successful removal at Randwick Children's Hospital of her large, debilitating neck tumour.

Ilandia (18 months old) from Timor-Leste had a large sacrococcygeal teratoma removed at Canberra Hospital. She was discharged after 9 days but required a long recovery and rehabilitation period.

Lisa (16 years old) from Vanuatu was treated at Westmead Children's Hospital for a pronounced scoliosis. She had great support from D9685 volunteers Lianne Corbett, Liz Rupp, Marilyn Kenney and Dr Miriam Brooks. Lisa spent 11 days in hospital and much of the \$40,000 worth of hardware used to straighten her spine was donated by LifeHealthcare.

Verzinette (15 years old) from the Solomon Islands required treatment for a heart condition caused by rheumatic fever. Verzi and her Aunt Vedna arrived with no belongings so the team from D9685 quickly equipped them both with all the necessities. A post-operative infection caused a minor delay but Verzi returned home in time for Christmas with her family.

Mavis (1 year old) from the Solomon Islands was treated at Canberra Hospital for a sacrococcygeal teratoma. Mavis and her mother Diana, were billeted at Ronald McDonald House and returned home after a 51-day stay.

Vincent (3 months old) arrived from the Solomon Islands, very underweight due to a tracheoesophageal fistula. He was admitted to Canberra Hospital, for treatment to address his nutritional needs prior to remedial surgery, once a suitable body weight was reached.

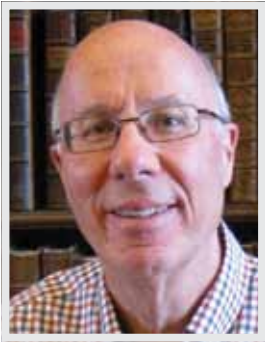
The Eastern Region welcomes new D9675 and D9685 District Chairs (Pip Lovely and Marilyn Kenney). We farewell Lyn Thorpe (D9670) with immense gratitude for her selfless service to ROMAC over many years. Lyn's retirement leaves a vacancy which we hope to fill shortly. I extend special thanks to Maria Moran and Russ Evans for their tireless input in D9675 and D9685.



Vincent



Verzinette, Dr Ian Nicolson and Vedna



Chris Joscelyne Communications Chair

Communications Report

The ROMAC Communications Committee, comprising Maggie Alexander (PP Rotary Club of North Ryde), Ann Burleigh (PP Rotary Club of Balmain) and Chris Joscelyne (PP Rotary Club of Sydney) has responsibility for all aspects of ROMAC marketing, public relations and communications.

The Communications Committee produces the ROMAC Annual Report, promotional brochures, flyers, Rotary Down Under magazine advertising, Newsletter and website content and social media stories. Our Facebook presence has been boosted with two short-burst marketing campaigns with a pleasingly resultant increase in Facebook followers.

Rexly has been a wonderful ROMAC success story and the 'face' of our recent marketing collateral (he's the cute little person in the striped hoodie). He is a highly recognisable and engaging character but our goal is to keep the ROMAC marketing and communications image fresh and current, with appropriate changes every few years.

The ROMAC Chair's Newsletter, edited by Maggie Alexander, is a proven and practical way to keep our active supporters updated. Our monthly Rotary Downunder advertising flyer is a useful tool, conceived and produced by Ann Burleigh. It is designed to alert both Rotarians and casual readers through short, clear and positive messages that outline ROMAC's crucial humanitarian mission.

The Committee extends grateful thanks to the ROMAC supporters, who have supplied stories and images for our use in the last 12 months. These contributions form the cornerstone of ROMAC's marketing and communications strategies and provide an essential way to capture attention, boost recall and encourage active and current engagement and fundraising. Again, many thanks.

All members of the Communications Committee step down in September 2019. We collectively extend our very best wishes to ROMAC for continuing success in bringing needy children from neighbouring countries to Australia or New Zealand for life-saving or transformative surgery.



ROMAC Friends Facebook page



ROMAC E-Newsletter

Some memorable ROMAC moments

August 2018



Geoff Pownall, President of the Rotary Club of Takapuna in Auckland, organised a night of theatre at Mrs Krishnan's Party for our ROMAC 30th Anniversary fundraising.

October 2018



The Rotary Club of Kangaroo Flat (Bendigo), Victoria, held a dinner to celebrate ROMAC's 30th Anniversary. Club President Bruce McClure was the host. Photo: L-R Barrie Cooper, Dr. Murray Stapleton, Rob Wilkinson, Rosie Lotawa.

March 2019



D9810 members set up and manned a ROMAC Stand at the recent Melbourne Multi-district Conference weekend. They spoke to dozens of attendees about the ROMAC story and sold jars of jam and raffle tickets. They banked \$1183, have recruited 3 new ROMAC volunteers from 3 different districts and have 8 requests for speakers - a great outcome! Photo: D9810 chair Gavan McIntyre with the winner of the wine raffle, President Hamish from RC Strathmore D9790.



These beautiful, cuddly teddy bears have been knitted for the ROMAC children who are undergoing treatment. This heart-warming project, involving all of the New Zealand Region, was coordinated by Wendy Cantlon of the Rotary Club of Maketu in District 9930, in the Bay of Plenty. Photo L-R: Overseas Patient Co-ordinator Moira McGivern, NZ ROMAC Chair Glenys Parton, and Host Club Liaison Barbara Watt.

December 2018



Professor Ed Mitchell joined the NZ Region ROMAC Team on 20 October 2010. His decade-long contribution has been significant, particularly over a period of growth in the numbers of children coming to New Zealand for treatment. The team in New Zealand has greatly valued his wise counsel and guidance over medical matters and his support of individuals, and of the team as a whole.

June 2019



ROMAC gets great support from airline staff escorting patients through customs and airside at departure gates. In recognition of their efforts, District 9600 Chair John Lee and Northern Region Treasurer David Ambrose presented Certificates of Appreciation to Solomon Air Staff.

Photo L-R: Arlene Bennett, Solomon Air Manager of Customer Care, District 9600 Chair John Lee and Northern Region Treasurer and Gail Bennett, Solomon Air Operations Manager Brisbane.

September 2019



The District Governor, Ian Kiernan, and his wife Jasmine recently visited Ronald McDonald House in Auckland. They got an overview of the wonderful service this facility and its team provide to the region and to ROMAC families, and caught up with two of our patients in residence.

Photo: DG 9910 Ian Kiernan and his wife Jasmine with little Jasminah and her mum Angelina.

Who's Who at ROMAC

2018-2019 ROMAC BOARD AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Role	Name	Email	Club Affiliation
Chair	Rob Wilkinson	chair@romac.org.au	North Ryde
Deputy Chair	Brian Eddy	deputychair@romac.org.au	Rossmoyne
Treasurer	Michael Carrigan	treasurer@romac.org.au	Buderim
Operations Director	Carol Bourne	operations@romac.org.au	Belvoir-Wodonga
Fundraising Director	Harold Sharp	fundraising@romac.org.au	Crows Nest
Medical Director	Dr Larry Roddick	medical@romac.org.au	Charlestown
Secretary	Jim Prokhovnik	secretary@romac.org.au	Albert Park
Communications Chair	Chris Joscelyne	marketing@romac.org.au	Rotary eClub One
Operations Manager	Judy Holland	opsmanager@romac.org.au	Redlands Bayside
Operations-IT Consultants	Asim Khawaja	itsupport@romac.org.au	North Ryde
	Barry Wilson		Kiama
	Richard Woodburn (June onwards)		Randwick
Communications Advisor and Editor	Ann Burleigh	communications@romac.org.au	Honorary Member
Communications Coordinator	Maggie Alexander	editor@romac.org.au	Honorary Member
Regional Chairs			
New Zealand	Glenys Parton	newzealand@romac.org.au	Tauranga Sunrise
Northern	Wayne Litherland	northern@romac.org.au	Rockhampton South
Southern	Jill Oliver	southern@romac.org.au	Alfredton
Eastern	Richard Woodburn	eastern@romac.org.au	Randwick
	Bob Richards (October onwards)		Sutherland
Western	Susan Bruse	western@romac.org.au	Wyalkatchem
	Bob Cooper (June onwards)		Kwinana
Central	Brett Dalton	central@romac.org.au	Burnside

Very special thanks to ROMAC corporate sponsors:



Some beautiful ROMAC children



Our cover image is of Christella, a little burns patient from Vanuatu, happily able to walk again following admission, surgery and rehabilitation at The Children's Hospital, Westmead. Special thanks also to Ronald McDonald House.

ROMAC

*Quite simply...
because little children
from neighbouring countries
need our help.*



ROMAC is a truly transformative humanitarian project of Australian and New Zealand Rotary Clubs with assistance from Rotarians in the Oceania region.

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Districts
of Oceania



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