



HOUSE NEWSLETTER

2021 Spring Edition

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 latest Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Newsletter. Whilst we thought we were over COVID restrictions and lockdowns we are currently dealing with Version 6 or is it 7. We have become quite proficient with mask wearing along with other restrictions but really miss the help of our loyal volunteers. The staff and the Operations and Governance Sub-committee have helped to sustain the necessary protocols in place to maintain a safe place for our guests and staff. Many thanks to the volunteers coming in on an as needs individual basis to maintain the gardens and facilities and as controlled by the Manager who has been able to issue work permits for such needed works.

On a brighter note, we are now 15 years old having celebrated our birthday on 2 September. Like all birthdays during COVID we had to celebrate in isolation, which hardly felt like a celebration. Hopefully we will be able to do something after we are released from lockdown.

We have been very grateful to receive financial support from a variety of organisations recently. The purchase of an elevating work platform has provided a significant improvement to our ability to do work at heights around the building where we have very high lights and windows. Thanks to Alan MacRae, Rotary District 9820 and the Rotary Clubs of Moe and Morwell. A Latrobe City Grant that was used to upgrade more of our door locks to the S2 token model making access much easier for residents and staff. Finally, one of our long-term supporters, the Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust, has helped us out of a financial burden by offsetting the cost of the Hot Water Heating System in Stage 1 that failed recently and required a complete replacement. As mentioned above this type of support enables us to keep our costs to a minimum.

Traralgon Independent Tyre Service have also come to our aid by fitting new boots to our car at cost price, including fitting and balancing etc. It is support such as this that enables us to keep our operating costs to a minimum and hence our accommodation charges.



Port Wine Japanese Magnolia flowers in the GRCH courtyard

Last month was a particularly sad time for GRCH with the passing of one of our long-time volunteers Tom Shanahan. Tom was a Past President at Morwell Rotary and a Paul Harris Fellow. Tom was well known to our staff, volunteers and to many of our past guests, he was responsible in the early days for starting the data entry of our hard copy historical guest files.

Finally, many thanks to our staff and volunteers for enabling us to keep our doors open during these difficult times. Stay safe and hopefully we can get together on the other side to celebrate maintaining our facility in a safe manner.

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



Centenary House celebrates 15 years!

In 2003 Rotary International was making plans to celebrate the organisation's 100th anniversary and a call was made for Rotary Clubs to plan a 'Centenary Project' to coincide with the date in February 2005. While Rotary District 9820 covers Gippsland, the Mornington Peninsula and into south east Melbourne, it is divided into seven clusters for organisational purposes. The Latrobe Group (as it was in the 2002-2003 year) consisted of Rotary Clubs from Drouin to Traralgon and was supervised by Assistant Governor Ken Peake. A meeting was held with all the Club Presidents to discuss planning a project; hence Gippsland Rotary Centenary House was born.



Inaugural members of the GRCH Committee of Management in 2004 (L-R) Front: Kay Radford, Vicki Hamilton, Diane Wilkinson and Yvonne Wood. Back: Doug Bell, Ken Peake and Norm Butler. (absent Barry Dunstan)

For several years the GRCH Committee worked tirelessly to gain support and raise funds to build what would be the first stage. Originally the purpose of the House focused on providing accommodation for paediatric oncology patients and their families, however, most children having cancer treatment attend a Melbourne hospital. So the plans evolved to accommodate adult patients attending the Gippsland Cancer Care Centre at Latrobe Regional Hospital for outpatient chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Latrobe City purchased a block of land adjacent to the hospital (leased for a peppercorn rent) and with grants from the federal and state governments, philanthropic organisations and local business and groups, building commenced in 2005.

Officially opening on 2nd September 2006 the House had six self-contained guest rooms and communal facilities including kitchen, dining, lounge, laundry, reading and computer areas.



Group meeting to review the plans for Stage 2 of Centenary House.. (L-R) Kingbuilt rep. Lochlan Wall, GRCH Chairman Ken Peake, Architect Audun Pederson and GRCH Secretary Mike Answerth.



Plaque dedicated at the opening in 2006 by The Hon. Peter McGauran MHR and Brendan Jenkins MLA.



Rotary District 9820 Governor (2006-2007) Denis Heslin unveiling a plaque recognising Rotary's support at the opening in 2006

It was quickly apparent that six rooms were not enough to meet the needs of the community so two additional rooms were created by converting volunteer spaces to make eight rooms available to guests in stage 1. Planning also commenced on a second stage with original architect Auden Pederson designing the extension. We were fortunate to obtain a significant grant from the federal government that when combined with donations from Rotary Clubs and philanthropic trusts funded our costs for stage 2. A tender was established, with local builder Kingbuilt contracted and commencing work in 2011.

Stage two was officially opened by Rotary District 9820 Governor (2011-2012) Tony Spring on 23rd November 2012. The extension contained nine guest rooms, communal areas and a community room for use by GRCH committees and local groups. The 17 guest rooms available continued to meet the demand for several years.



Stage 2 opening plaque

In 2016 we held an afternoon tea to celebrate our ten year anniversary. A commemorative tree (pictured right) was planted by then GRCH Chairman Ken Peake. The plaque for the tree was updated when Ken stood down from the GRCH Committee of Management in 2019 to acknowledge his long term dedication to the House, having served as inaugural chairman for 15 years.



Another grant from the federal government in 2018 allowed us to commence building our third and final stage. Kingbuilt was again contracted to complete the work, adding 13 guest rooms, a lounge room and a laundry to the facility. This took the total number of rooms to 30, which will hopefully meet the needs of the community well into the future. Stage 3 was officially opened in 2019 by The Honorable Darren Chester MP, Federal Member for Gippsland.

Ten year celebrations (L-R) Member for Morwell Russell Northe, Member for Gippsland Darren Chester, Operations Manager Carol Crewe, GRCH Chairman Ken Peake and Secretary Mike Answerth

In the past 15 years, the GRCH Committee of Management, staff and volunteers have been proud to provide safe, supportive and affordable accommodation to over 7000 individuals from across Gippsland and further afield.

One of the biggest contributors to our success has been and remains the service provided by our volunteers. With only three staff, volunteers are essential to our operations. Our volunteers contribute in a wide variety of ways including through the Committee of Management, fundraising, cleaning, lawns, gardening, maintenance and administration. As current GRCH Chairman Dave Swainsbury stated “Without the dedication of our volunteers we would not be financially viable, we would probably have to close our doors tomorrow.”



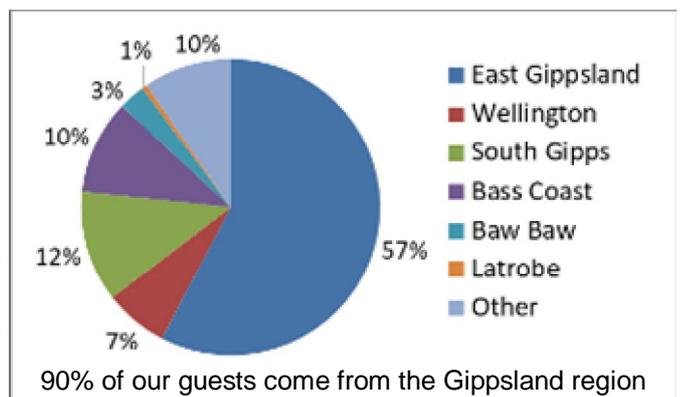
Marg Brown, the first guest to stay in Stage 3



GRCH volunteers and staff with certificates acknowledging their extended service for National Volunteer Week 2021.

The responses received from our guest surveys is testimony to the high level of assistance and comfort provided to those going through a stressful period associated with specialist medical care. We would like to pass onto every person or group that has supported us over the past 15 years the sincere appreciation expressed by those who stay at Centenary House.

“Gippsland Rotary Centenary House sets the standard for how community accommodation should be provided to cancer patients. I do not believe you will find many other facilities comparable to Centenary House anywhere else” stated GRCH Operations Manager Carol Crewe.



Thank you to all those who have assisted our “project for the community, by the community” over the past 15 years. We look forward to serving the Gippsland community into the future.

COVID-19 UPDATE

This is the fourth Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Newsletter with a Covid-19 update. Looking back over the past three editions there is a strange sense of de ja vu, it all seems to go around in cycles.

Centenary House staff have a CovidSafe Plan in place and continue to follow the requirements. This includes all staff, volunteers, guests and visitors signing in using the Services Victoria QR code, wearing masks in communal areas, regular cleaning and social distancing. Through these measures we hope to keep our guests as safe as possible.

Our occupancy continues to fluctuate based on the current restrictions but we have continued to provide accommodation through the pandemic. There is always a significant drop when Latrobe Regional Hospital restricts visitors as family members do not tend to stay locally if they cannot visit the patient for at least a short time each day. However, bookings related to radiotherapy treatments continue to be required.

The community room has been closed during each lockdown and then re-opened as the restrictions ease. The support groups that meet in the community room regularly have become used to rolling with the changes. The same with our volunteers, who stop coming in for their regular shifts during lockdowns. The volunteers are often on the phone, keen to ask about coming back, as soon as an announcement is made.

If you have any queries about staying at Centenary House please contact staff on 03 51711600 or via email at carol@centenaryhouse.org.au

Centenary House Receives Uplift

Gippsland Rotary Centenary House has received a real uplift with the acquisition of an important part of health & safety equipment through the co-operation of two local Rotary Clubs and a grant from the local District.

Moe and Morwell Rotary Clubs each contributed \$1500 which was matched dollar for dollar by the Rotary District to enable the purchase of an elevating platform, valued at \$6,000, for use in the House. Operations Manager of Centenary House, Carol Crewe, said: "This is a very important addition to the facility as it will enable staff and volunteers who undertake maintenance to access high areas of the building in a safe manner without the risk of climbing on ladders. Cleaning skylights, changing high light globes and accessing ceiling areas can now be done in a completely safe and convenient way. We are most grateful for this generous gift from the two local Rotary Clubs".

President of the Rotary Club of Moe, Di Harrison said that "this was a good example of co-operation between clubs to ensure that our joint contributions could be more effective in purchasing a major item of equipment than separate donations. We are very pleased to be part of this project."

These sentiments were endorsed by the President of the Rotary Club of Morwell, Mike Answerth, who added "We have had a good working relationship with our friends at Moe for some time now and this is yet another case of a joint exercise enabling us to achieve something that may not have been possible individually. We are also pleased to have the assistance of District 9820 in matching our donations.



GRCH Operations Assistant Tania Whitehead cleaning high windows

Vale Tom Shanahan



The Committee of Management, staff and volunteers of Gippsland Rotary Centenary House would like to acknowledge the dedicated support provided by volunteer Tom Shanahan.

Tom was a long standing supporter of Centenary House, commencing as a volunteer in 2007 after relocating to the area, with his wife Cindy, and joining the Rotary Club of Morwell.

The last few years have been difficult due to his ongoing health issues, however, Tom's kindness and enthusiasm will be remembered by staff and guests alike.

Our sincere condolences are with Cindy and their family at this sad time

Pictured left: GRCH Committee member Kay Radford with Tom at the 2016 GRCH Volunteers Christmas lunch.

Thank You to Trust

The Trust established by Traralgon business man Keith Chenhall to support local organisations has supported Centenary House again this year.

After the stage 1 hot water service failed we were grateful to receive a grant from the Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust to cover the costs of purchasing and installing a new system. The quick replacement of the hot water service meant the room in stage 1 were only out of action for a short time.

Our sincere thanks to the Keith Chenhall Charitable Trust Advisory Committee members for their ongoing support.

Latrobe City Helps Secure House

Following on from the grant last year to update the locks in stage 1, we were grateful to receive another grant for Latrobe City to cover 50% of the cost of upgrading the locks on the guest room doors in our second stage this year.

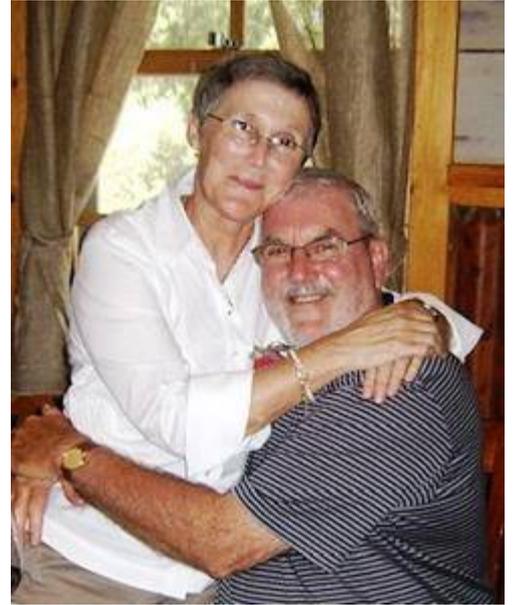
The change from key locks to electronic ones means that all our guest rooms are now on the one system. The Salto system has improved our security with keys able to be deleted from the system if they are taken home or misplaced.

The swipe system is also preferred by guests who find it much easier to use than trying to get a key into a lock. Guests have the option of a silicone wrist band or a small fob they wear on a lanyard around their neck. The electronic 'keys' can be programed to open individual doors or a zone, ensuring that guests can access all the necessary doors but limit their access to any other room.

Introducing the Committee of Management “Ray Scheffer”

Ray joined the Committee of Management during the middle of building Stage 2 and has been on the Committee for ten years. Ray is a member of the Rotary Club of Traralgon and holds the position of Director of Community Service, a position he will be relinquishing this year as “old age and time are quickly catching up on him these days”.

His early years were spent in Maffra where he attended primary school and his secondary education was completed at the Sale Technical School. Ray graduated at Year 12, won a scholarship and teaching bursary, then went onto Caulfield Tech to get a Diploma of Fine Arts. After two years in industry and a successful art exhibition he went on to get his Diploma of Technical Teaching at Technical Teachers College in Toorak. His first teaching job was art at Doveton Tech, then he went onto Yallourn Technical College where he enjoyed 35 years as a Senior Teacher and Head of Department.



GRCH Committee Member
Ray Scheffer with wife Jackie

While attending Caulfield Institute Ray’s mentor was Kenneth Jack (a well known Australian artist). This influence is reflected in Ray’s love of drawing and painting old buildings which resulted in a series of paintings of old Yallourn township. At Yallourn Tech Ray also developed a gardening squad and involved the students in many community gardening projects. They managed to win a State Schools gardening competition and were presented with an award at Treasury Gardens in Melbourne, with a follow-on visit from Kevin Heinze, which was a big deal for the students.

Ray’s gardening and design work gradually took over and he developed a landscape business and retired from teaching. He has worked on many projects around the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland. It was a great honour to work with Auden Pedersen the architect of Gippsland Rotary Centenary House. Ray won a competition for development of the gardens and surrounds of Morwell Civic Centre and Lake when it was first developed. He also contributed design work around the Immigration Wall at the Civic Centre in Morwell and design work for the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne. Ray’s passion at the moment is the improvement and care of the gardens around Centenary House and this is made possible by a great band of volunteers.



Ray’s self portrait!

Ray’s long standing interest in art remains, with paintings and drawings in many private collections, including the Italian Consulate, plus commissioned design work and logos around the Valley. Jackie and Ray have a son and daughter, Jamie and Jacklyn, and two beautiful grandchildren Ellia (who lives locally) and Carter who is 15 months of age (living in Canada). When restrictions are lifted Ray and Jackie plan to be off to Canada for their long awaited first cuddle with Carter.

Upcoming Events to support GRCH (save the date!)

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

- ◆ **Christmas in July**—rescheduled to Friday 10th December 2021 at Traralgon Vineyard.

Supporting Gippsland Rotary Centenary House

Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Inc. is a community organisation, managed by a volunteer Board on a not for profit basis and registered as a Public Benevolent Institution with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). Centenary House is also a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) and therefore all donations are tax deductible.

To ensure that accommodation charges are affordable for guests we fundraise to subsidise the costs for patients and families, therefore you can help by making a donation to Centenary House.

If you would like to assist Gippsland Rotary Centenary House in providing safe, supportive and affordable accommodation for patients (and their families) undergoing cancer treatment and other specialist medical services at the Latrobe Regional Hospital please complete the form below.

GRCH Donation Form

Title: _____ Full Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

I wish to make a donation of \$ _____ to Gippsland Rotary Centenary House

Cheque (please make cheques payable to Gippsland Rotary Centenary House)

Direct Deposit (please enter Reference for transaction below)

Account Name: Gippsland Rotary Centenary House

BSB: 633-000 Account Number: 134366293

Reference: _____

Credit Card (please complete details below)

Name on card: _____

Card No. _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry Date ____ / ____

CVV _____
(3 digit number on the back of card)

Visa Mastercard

Signature of Cardholder _____

To receive a receipt please return your completed form to Centenary House at 39 Valley Drive, Traralgon VIC 3844 or carol@centenaryhouse.org.au

Official receipts will be issued on receipt of the donation and form.

In accordance with the Privacy Act, information provided on this form shall ONLY be used in relation to GRCH. Personal contact details will not be sold or traded. If you have any questions about donations or our privacy policy please contact House staff on 03 5171 1660

Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Newsletter

- To assist Gippsland Rotary Centenary House I agree to receive the Newsletter via e-mail rather than have a copy posted out to me. Please add my e-mail address as below to the electronic mailing list.
- Please remove me from the mailing list for the Gippsland Rotary Centenary House Newsletter, I do not wish to receive a copy of the newsletter in future.

Full Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

e-mail address: _____

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 am — 4.00 pm)

Phone: 03 5171 1600

Fax: 03 5171 1660

Email: info@centenaryhouse.org.au