



NOMINATION FOR RURAL HEALTH AWARD

(as part of Rural Health Week 2009)

Award Category: Rural Health Group Award

Nominee Contact Details: The Rotary Club of Wynyard

c/- Mrs Janet Sell, Publicity Officer
121 Table Cape Road, Wynyard 7325
Phone: 6442-1265
Email: janetbernard@southcom.com.au

1. State primary reason(s) candidate should be recognised:

The Rotary Club of Wynyard has demonstrated an outstanding contribution to the health and wellbeing of the Wynyard community over a number of years through the Club's proactive and innovative approach to organising events which specifically target the health needs of the local community.

Their efforts have contributed significantly to a raised awareness of important health issues among both Club and community members. The Club provides tremendous support (through local fundraising) for initiatives which specifically address local health needs. The Club also provides energetic support and direct sponsorship to undergraduates in the University of Tasmania's medical degree, as part of the Club's aim to play their part in attracting young health professionals to the area. Their activities encourage the forging of links between the local community and undergraduate medical students early in their studies, with a view to encouraging favourable consideration of Wynyard as a potential place for future rural medical practice later in the students' medical careers.

The Club has also been influential in gaining wider support for particular health initiatives through other Tasmanian Rotary Clubs, including the important Bowelscan program, which is now recognised as contributing to a greater understanding of bowel cancer health issues in many communities across the State.

Has the candidate been informed of this nomination?

Yes, the Club has been informed and is happy to be nominated.

2. Attach specific information to be considered by award committee (maximum 2 A4 pages)

Nominator: Rural Clinical School, University of Tasmania
Contact: Rosalie Maynard, Manager Marketing & Community Engagement

Address: Private Bag 3513, Burnie 7320

Phone Number: 6430 5920 or mobile 0427 61 22 66

Date: 28 July 2009

Additional specific supporting information:

Over the last few years the Rotary Club of Wynyard (with a current active membership of 34) has championed medically-related causes and generously raised funds to support a variety of health-related projects of direct benefit to the health and wellbeing of the local community. The Club identifies these areas as deserving special attention through a process of consultation and prioritisation with their members who are drawn from all walks of life and a wide range of ages and professions. These include:

- The introduction of the Bowelscan program into Tasmania in 2006. (At this stage, the program had been operating on the mainland for almost 25 years but only in limited Rotary districts. Initially there was limited take-up by other Tasmanian Rotary Clubs, but through the leadership of Wynyard Rotary, most Clubs are now participating and 10,000 kits have been sold. Many lives have been saved and the \$20,000 raised state-wide will be used to fund an Australian Rotary Health research grant into cancer (which will be further boosted by an additional \$10,000 to be contributed by Tasmanian Rotary Clubs across the State).
- *beyondblue* information evening – March 2009 – the Club hosted a visit from Professor Ken Kirkby representing *beyondblue*, the National Depression Initiative. (Prof Kirkby is Chief Psychiatrist with the Tasmanian Mental Health Services, DHHS, and Head of the Discipline of Psychiatry at UTAS.) Members of the public were invited to a free community forum to hear Prof Kirkby talk about mental health issues, stimulate discussion around these and answer questions from the audience. This followed a very well attended Mental Health Forum in 2004 and a "Go for your Life" Active Aging Forum held in 2007 (the latter made possible through \$2400 of Club funding).
- \$1,000 to the Royal Flying Doctor Service in June 2009 for construction of a canopy at the Wynyard airport to provide shelter for patients (and RFDS staff) during patient transfer. The money was raised from a performance hosted by the Club based on a radio show, staged in front of a live audience.
- \$1,000 to the NW Regional Hospital's Kidney Unit in 2007-2008.

Of particular significance is the Club's vision and leadership in implementing and providing support for programs aimed at improving the recruitment and retention of doctors to the local area:

- The Rotary Club of Wynyard Scholarship in Rural Medicine valued at \$5,000 over two years was first offered in 2007/2008 following an approach by the Club to the Rural Clinical School and subsequent discussions with the UTAS Scholarships Office. The scholarship is open to students commencing the final two years of the UTAS medical degree at the RCS, and aims to encourage and support a student with an interest in rural medicine to study at the RCS. In addition to financial support, the scholarship provides honorary Club membership and an offer to mentor the recipient during their studies and link them to the broader community through Club activities and attendance at Club meetings. A condition of the scholarship is that the recipient undertakes a General Practice attachment at the Wynyard Doctors Surgery as part of their studies – and this provides a further link to the local community and to local health professionals in both a teaching and mentoring capacity.

The scholarship is financed entirely from funds raised locally. Ultimately, the Club hopes that the links established with undergraduate medical students may translate to these students returning to practice in the local community at some stage after graduation.

- Following successful outcomes from the 2007/2008 scholarship (the recipient is now an intern at the NW Regional Hospital and has established an excellent relationship with the Club), the Club provided a second scholarship for 2009/2010.
- This philosophy has continued through invaluable and very generous support by the Club to the School of Medicine's "Rural Communities Week Program" for Year 2 medical students. In a program brokered by the Rural Clinical School, the Club provided billeting, wonderful hospitality and valuable community contacts for a group of students based in Wynyard in April this year as part of their second year curriculum. Feedback from the students, community members and local health professionals was resoundingly positive and students reported they were much more likely to consider rural medical practice as a result of the week spent in Wynyard – with the strength of community support networks, the "can-do" approach of the community to addressing local health needs, and the unexpectedly well-resourced local facilities being key factors in the students' evaluation.
- The Club's support for the "Rural Communities Week Program" was subsequently used as a model for approaching other North West Rotary Clubs for support to host other groups of students – and very successfully adopted by the Ulverstone West, Ulverstone and Latrobe Rotary Clubs.
- As well, the Rotary Club of Wynyard has supported \$5,000 Australian Rotary Health Research Fund Scholarships to medical students attending Rural Clinical Schools around Australia through their affiliation to the national Rotary body.

In addition:

- The Club's major annual fundraiser is an Old Time Music Hall, now in its 38th year, with most club members involved as performers or in other roles. The proceeds of this year's production "Diamond Lil's Saloon – Music Hall in the Wild West" will be used to fund major projects in the coming year. Over the past few years these have included local support to schools, sporting clubs, youth groups and exchange students and overseas projects such as Shelterbox and equipping a school and medical centre in Fiji. More recently substantial donations and practical help have been given to the Victorian Bush Fires Appeal and the Midlands drought project.
- The Club is currently supporting a submission by the Waratah-Wynyard Council for a Rural Health Week grant to fund a "Pit Stop" workshop in Wynyard during November. The Club would help with promotion and publicity as well as organisation on the day if this submission is successful. Members are also working on some other fun/ healthy activities to be run as part of Rural Health Week.
- A number of Club members have recently been trained by the Red Cross as Emergency Services volunteers and will be ready to help if there is ever a disaster requiring Wynyard residents to be evacuated or assisted.

The Rural Clinical School is nominating the Club as being highly deserving of the Group Award. Our two organisations have developed a strong rapport over the last four years, and this relationship has proved extremely beneficial to collaborations in a number of health-related projects directly relevant to this rural region.

The Club's activities and dynamism have undoubtedly contributed enormously to raising the local community's awareness of many health issues – whether by information sessions or through interesting and fun activities. This has been enhanced by an additional focus on gaining good media publicity for these events, so the information is reinforced and disseminated to an even wider audience.

