



International Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals

4 June 2023

## THE ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IN MELBOURNE

The Fellowship had a robust presence at the RI Convention in Melbourne.

Preparations for the Convention started several months ago, with securing a booth in the House of Friendship, booking a meeting room, making arrangements for our 'Dine with the Doctors' event and establishing contacts with members from Australia, New Zealand and neighbouring countries.

Some of the leaflets and display materials were produced in the UK and some were printed in Melbourne and delivered to local friends.

Our booth was colourful and displayed up to date information about our Fellowship. There were plenty of easy-to-read fliers about our activities at the booth.

The booth was staffed by Chris and myself all the time – we also had help from Amal and Ann, as well as our member David Goldsmith from Melbourne.



We all felt that there was considerable interest in who we are and what we do. We were recognised for our projects, our fundraising and our joined up, multidisciplinary approach to health programmes.

The contacts and conversations convinced me that we have huge potential to increase our portfolio of programmes and contribute to impactful programmes.

I was invited to speak in the WASH world summit on the topic of Water and Sanitation in Healthcare Facilities, which is an area, I hope, we would be able to explore further.

An NGO (Projectrozanna) which has extensive medical training programmes reached out and would like to liaise with us – I hope to set up a meeting with them soon.

I was also invited to attend a meeting of representatives from a number of medical NGOs who appears to be looking up to us to play a central role in sharing information and learning from one another. One important suggestion that came from this group is that the Fellowship should set up a Directory of Rotary connected Health Programmes. This group may grow and evolve, in which case the Fellowship will have a key role. I'll follow this up and report to the Board with more information.

We visited the massive warehouse managed by Australian Rotarians which repurposes and supplies medical equipment to many low-income countries. The initiatives by our Medical Equipment Subgroup led by Demetress Harrell received considerable attention and quite a few new connections.



We were given a room for a 'networking meeting' which is not recognised by RI for inclusion in the Convention Programmes. Yet, over 110 people attended the two hour meeting which was moderated by Ann. We heard presentations from Demetress, Olha, Amal, David and Juliet Altens and Ann. It was attended by representatives from some Action Groups and NGOs.

At the opening ceremony the RI President Jennifer Jones announced that the proposal from our Vice Chair Amal El-Sisi was chosen for the next Programme of Scale Grant – this is a four year multimillion dollar programme to prevent cervical cancer in Cairo. Amal is grateful for the support of the Fellowship and looks forward to closer work.

Our Annual Dinner was a grand occasion. We met in a private dining room and were treated to a champagne reception and a fabulous dinner in style. Judith Diment, RI's warden for all diplomatic representatives spoke in appreciation of the Fellowship.

We are now a strong organisation with a remarkable portfolio of programmes. We look forward to expanding our reach and increasing our impact under the leadership of Herbert and a new Board.



John Philip, Chair  
jp\_rotary@btinternet.com