

2023 ROTARY DISTRICT 9685 CONFERENCE - COWRA NSW

What a fabulous weekend conference at Cowra!
The speakers were inspiring and there were lots of laughs in between.



District Governor, Mina Howard

Going out into the countryside was a deliberate choice by **DG Mina Howard** and especially after last year's floods it was good to be able to have a meaningful impact on the economy out there. Many Rotarians chose to stay some extra days to leverage this even more.

Friday night Rotarians gathered at the Pavilion where the **Rotary Club of Cowra** put on a **good ol' Aussie BBQ**. Local historian **Lawrence Ryan** spoke about Cowra, particularly with reference to Japanese interment in World War II, the infamous Cowra Breakout and the consequences of that.



The Saturday session began with a dance performance by a local indigenous dance troupe and their talent shone. Local elder Aunty Esther Cutmore gave the Welcome to Country.



Cowra High School Indigenous Dance Troupe



After the formalities of welcome by District **Governor Mina Howard** and **Mayor Bill West**, **Rhett Butler** from SkyJuice Foundation spoke about SkyJuice – a program which provides low cost, safe water for humanitarian projects. More than 6600 filters have been installed in more than 70 countries.

Later in the morning there were talks by **Lucas Trihey**, adventurer and Big Bash participant on sustainability; **Emmanuel Musoni** from the Great Lakes Agency for Peace & Development; and **Rotarian Azita Abdollahian**



for the Shining Light Foundation which was set up in 2017 to help homeless people around Sydney.

AWARDS & PRESENTATIONS



Foreground L-R: Prof. Mary-Louise McLaws,
Hon. Assoc. Prof. Tony Irwin

It was with great pleasure that **District Governor Mina** presented epidemiologist Professor **Mary-Louise McLaws AO**, Professor of Epidemiology, Healthcare, Infection and Infectious Disease Control; and Honorary Associate Professor **Tony Irwin**, Chartered Professional Engineer (Nuclear Engineering), lecturer and government advisor on nuclear engineering matters, with **Vocational Excellence Awards**.



Professor Catherine Bennett

Other guest speakers included epidemiologist **Professor Catherine Bennett**, **Mike Greenslade** from ShelterBox, retired ABC weatherman, meteorologist and avid bee keeper **Graham Creed** and **Jamie Isbister** who has had a fascinating career as Head of Strategic Infrastructure Division



Graham Creed

DFAT and the Federal Government's International Infrastructure Coordinator.



The pavilion was changed from 'theatre style seating' to 'dining settings' and everyone arrived to a fabulous meal and entertainment. The evening guest speaker was **Russell Oxford**, retired Chief Inspector of the NSW Homicide Squad who reflected on his career and gave some interesting insights into how modern technology is assisting in finding criminals.



Russell Oxford

EXPLORE COWRA

The Sunday morning finale was held in the beautiful **Cowra Japanese Gardens**. Created by prominent garden designer **Ken Nakajima** who considered it his best work.



The Japanese Ambassador **Mr Yamagami Shingo** gave a beautiful speech, outlining the relationship between Japan and Cowra and the relationship which promotes goodwill and peace. Bob

Griffith told the story of the Japanese Gardens.



New water tank Indigenous art murals



Australia's World Peace Bell



Antonio

Other highlights were **Antonio's Wine Tours**, dancing to **Pengopuss Swing Band** and of course all the catching up with old friends and meeting new ones that comes with any Rotary conference.

If you missed Cowra – there is still opportunity to join in the **Rotary International Conference in Melbourne in May** or get ready to join next year's District Conference which will be held in the beautiful coastal Terrigal environs.



Indigenous art murals on bridge pylons

