

As always, the Rotary Club of Gawler has been busy in the Gawler Community and further afield.

I have included some of the items published in the Gawler Bunyip in recent weeks.

Gawler Rotary inducts new member

BRIAN BURT

A NEW member has been welcomed into the Gawler Rotary Club family at a meeting held last week.

Local businesswoman Gayle Joyce was inducted as a member of Gawler Rotary at a dinner meeting which was held on Monday, August 7.

Gayle will be a familiar face to many in Gawler, as owner of the popular Poetic Justice Café in Walker Place and also the Olive Branch Café in the Gawler Civic Centre.

President John Lyons had the pleasure of welcoming Gayle into the club.

Gayle was also the first new member he has inducted since

taking over the role.

John said he is looking forward to inducting many more members during his time as President.

Gayle was sponsored by Rotarian Beth Hudman who leads the club's dynamic membership committee

alongside Margaret Leversedge. Known for her altruistic

work in the community, Gayle was this year named Corporate Citizen of the Year at Gawler Council's Australia Day Awards ceremony.

Club members are looking forward to utilising Gayle's vast knowledge of the needs of our community to continue our mission to "do good in the world".



Rotary Club assists the community with its humanitarian efforts

MORE than 20 Rotarians were involved with Gawler Show parking across both show days, with 250 to 300 cars parked each day.

In other rotary news, South Australian volunteer and friend of Gawler, Rotarian Mark Forgie, is helping coordinate aid in Ukraine.

Rotary's Ukraine New Dawn Project was launched in Gawler in February and has raised thousands of dollars to assist the Ukrainian health service.

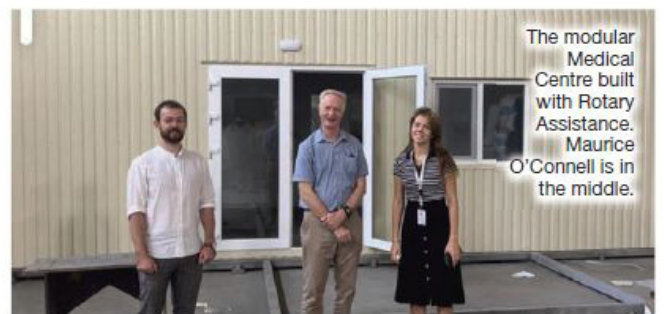
Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many health services have been destroyed or are stretched to the limit.

The conditions in some facilities are appalling.

The second of three modular Medical Centres, built in Odesa for a regional community in East Ukraine is now complete and ready for transport to the selected site.

This project demonstrates the capacity of Rotarians (in District 9510 Australia and District 2232 Ukraine) and our project partners, New Dawn (Odesa) to deliver Humanitarian Aid, on the ground in Ukraine.

This Medical Centre supported by the local Health Authorities will provide Medical Services to a community of 10,000 people. This Facility will become operational in early September.



For the past two years we have collaborated with Variety and supported the Variety Club Bash.

This year, President Elect Anthony Barilla and two friends took part in the Bash, raising thousands of dollars to assist needy children. The quiz night conducted in conjunction with Gawler Rotary raised an amazing \$11,000.



Claire Forgie and Grace Barilla from the winning Taylor & Forgie team.



Gawler Rotarians Ian Nys and Mark and Julie Smeaton.

PHOTOS: Supplied

Quiz night kicks off Variety Bash

BRIAN BURT

THE Variety Bash was created in 1985 by Dick Smith who took a group of friends for a drive he called 'The Bourke to Burketown Bash'.

It was not a race or rally, but a crazy and fun event designed to raise funds for children who are sick, disadvantaged or living with a disability. The format has remained the same over the years.

The model of the vehicles must be in standard condition

and at least 25 years old.

The first South Australian Bash was held in 1989 and 'Bashers' have raised \$48 million over the years.

The 'Wog Boys' - Anthony Barilla, Joseph Furina and Michael Nocera in Car WGBY - will represent Gawler and Districts in the 2023 Bash and are sponsored by a host of generous businesses and organisations.

The Bash leaves Port Adelaide on August 12 and will travel through Broken Hill, Bunnerungee and Pinaroo before finishing at

McLaren Vale on August 19.

On July 15, about 120 people attended an exceptionally successful quiz night at Nixon's Function Centre.

The event raised the amazing amount of \$11,000 and was enjoyed by everyone.

After a hard fought battle, the Taylor and Forgie Team were the eventual winners.

Tax deductible donations to support this great event can be made by going to www.savarietybash.com.au/ carwgbythewogboys

Local Police Officer Gary Wills was named winner of the Rotary Club of Unley's Police Officer of the Year Award, mainly due to his work with the Blue Rose Project.

This generated an enormous amount of publicity. The award winner was announced at the Royal Adelaide Show on September 8th and was featured on the Channel 9 News, several radio stations and in the Advertiser.

The Bunyip featured Gary on the front page and in a detailed article on September 13th and he was also mentioned in the Angaston Leader.

Another article was published in today's Bunyip. I can't speak too highly of the work Chris Davis and the team from Unley Rotary who organised the awards and Sara Gilligan of SAPOL's Media Liaison Team have made to showcase this award.

PP Brian Burt



SAPOL Media Liaison Officer and former *Bunyip* editor Sara Gilligan with Senior Constable Gary Wills.



South Australian Police Commissioner Grant Stevens, SC Gary Wills, District Governor Craig Dowling, Unley Rotary Club Coordinator Chris Davis and Unley Rotary Club President John Peacham.

Award win gives Rotary pride

GAWLER Rotarian Brian Burt had the privilege to attend the presentation of Senior Constable Gary Wills as South Australian Police Officer of the Year earlier this month.

The Gawler-based officer was announced as the worthy recipient at the Royal Adelaide Show on September 8, as reported by *The Bunyip* last week.

Mr Burt was invited to the ceremony after nominating Snr Const Wills for the prestigious award, which is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Unley.

Snr Const Wills is a Family

Violence Intervention Officer who works at the Barossa Criminal Investigation Branch based at Gawler Police Station and is the coordinator of the Blue Rose Project, a pilot project which launched in Gawler in May 2021.

Due to gusty winds and intermittent rain the crowd was not as large as anticipated.

Following the presentation, Gary's family, Unley Rotarians, Rotary District 9510 Governor Craig Dowling and Police Officers, including Commissioner Grant Stevens, gathered for a press conference and light refreshments.



BURTON'S SCHLUTER DOUBLE UP P53-54



Gawler Senior Constable Gary Wills has been named South Australian Police Officer of the Year for his work with Gawler's young people (2013-2023) (Brendan Simpkins)

OUR TOP COP

BRENDAN SIMPKINS
SENIOR Constable Gary Wills wasn't sure he would ever make a return to active duty after undergoing triple bypass surgery three years ago.
But the 59-year-old is back on the beat in Gawler, leading a special project that has culminated with him being named South Australia's Police Officer of the Year last week.
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This year's South Australia Police Officer of the Year, Senior Constable Gary Wills, pictured with Commissioner Grant Stevens, congratulating the Gawler-based officer on the accolade. PHOTO: Supplied



Dear Gary Wills,
I hope this letter finds you well. I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering support and assistance during the tough times I've faced.

Your service and guidance have made an immeasurable difference in my life, and I want you to know just how much I appreciate it.

In life, we all encounter challenging moments that can leave us feeling overwhelmed, lost, and uncertain. For me, those times came unexpectedly, and I often felt like I was navigating through a storm without a compass.

It was during these difficult moments that you stepped into my life, and your presence has been a beacon of hope and strength.

Your willingness to help me, whether it was through your expertise, a lending hand, or simply being there to listen, has been a source of immense comfort.

Your service goes beyond the call of duty, and your dedication to making a positive impact is truly commendable.

I want to acknowledge the countless hours you've spent assisting me, the patience you've shown, and the kindness you've extended.

Your support has not only helped me overcome the immediate challenges but has also empowered me with the knowledge and strength to face future hurdles.

Throughout this journey, you've taught me valuable life lessons.

You've shown me the importance of resilience, the power of compassion, and the beauty of selflessness.

Your actions have inspired me to be a better person, and I hope to pay your kindness forward to others in need.

As I reflect on the tough times I've experienced, I can't help but feel immense gratitude for having you by my side.

Your friendship, mentorship, or professional expertise has been an invaluable gift that I cherish deeply.

I want you to know that your service has made a profound impact on my life, and I will forever be thankful for your unwavering support.

In a world that can sometimes feel indifferent, your compassion and assistance have been a ray of hope.

Thank you again for being there when I needed it the most.

Your service and friendship are treasures I hold close to my heart, and I look forward to a future where I can express my gratitude in person.

Wishing you all the happiness, success, and fulfillment that you deserve.

Gary Wills named Officer of the Year

Continued from front page

Describing that period of his life as his "most vulnerable", Snr Const Wills said he had no idea what his career would look like after pulling the blue back on.

"From being at that level of vulnerability and not knowing where I am going, to getting a chance to do something and realising I could do something else, and then really getting into it... it has reached the stage where this is not a job, it is a passion now," he said.

"To get this at the other end... it is 31 years to get there with a lot of people teaching me a lot of good things over all of those years.

"It validates all of that, but for me on a personal note, I thought I could actually come back and contribute."

Returning to active duty, Snr Const Wills was pulled into a meeting with Senior Sergeant Rob Mowday, officer in charge at Gawler, who assigned him a special task.

Having noticed a high volume of police calls regarding young people in care, the pair devised a pilot project focused on early intervention.

In the three months before the Blue Rose project took off in May 2021, there were 332 taskings predominately related to young

people in Gawler.

Since then, missing persons reports involving young have decreased by about 62 per cent since its inception.

Snr Const Wills said being named Officer of the Year wasn't just for him, it was for the young people he's worked with through the project.

"It's a partnership... I'm not with these young people 24/7, you just sow the seed and let them reap it, and they have," he said.

The past week has been a whirlwind for Snr Const Wills and he said he's still getting used to his new-found fame.

His inbox has been flooded with well-wishes and congratulations from all facets of the community, from people he knows and others he doesn't.

But the one that has meant the most to him came from one of the youths Snr Const Wills met through Blue Rose, which can be read on the right.

"I came into the station [on Sunday] and there was one of them here... he said he had heard about [the award] and wanted to say his thank yous, he had spent four hours the night before drawing up a letter he wanted to give to me," he said.

"He did it in two pages... the back page was a letter; it was probably the most touching

thing I've ever had in my life.

"He gave me the letter and I was stood out in the front office and the tears were just flowing, it was really from the heart. He spent four hours out of his night wording that until he got it perfect to what he wanted to say."

Snr Const Wills was nominated for the award by the Rotary Club of Gawler's Brian Burt.

In his nomination, Mr Burt praised Snr Const Wills for his ability to connect with Gawler's youth.

"It is very difficult to connect with these young people, to win their trust and communicate with them at their level," he said.

"Gary has the rare knack of doing this and being able to defuse dangerous and difficult situations and to encourage and mentor young people and help turn their lives around."

Snr Const Wills thanked his family and colleagues he has worked with over the years for their support and guidance, and to Mr Burt for nominating him.

But he saved his biggest thanks for the young people of Gawler.

"I want to thank the young people for letting me into their life, I am very proud of all of them," he said.



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