

APY LANDS SHELTER PROJECT WINS SA VOLUNTEER AWARD 2024.

On the 22nd May, at the SA Volunteer Awards 2024 ceremony held in National Wine Centre, Adelaide, the Rotary Club of Onkaparinga won 'The Andamooka' Community Project Award.

This award recognises "a community or group volunteer project of significant community benefit".



Peter Young (Project Leader) and Stephen Royal (Architect), accepted the certificate and trophy on behalf of the Rotary Club of Onkaparinga.

The APY Lands, in the north west corner of South Australia, covers over 103,000 square kilometres; an area larger than Tasmania and certainly much more remote. The distance between most of the eight main communities is approximately 100 km. While a recent up-grades of the road between the Stuart Highway and Pukatja (Ernabella) has improved travel on this route, most of the main roads that criss-cross this vast area are red earth and subject to torrential monsoonal rains and become impassible at times.

Vehicle breakdowns are also not uncommon. Having a place for travellers to rest, shelter and get water has become a safety necessity for the Anangu people, service providers and visitors.

Following successful brick paving projects in the APY Lands the Rotary Club of Onkaparinga were asked by the APY Executive to design and construct a series of roadside shelters.

After meetings with representatives of the APY Lands Executive, members of Onkaparinga Rotary Club designed a shelter to fit the brief provided.



Following design approval by the APY Lands Executive, consultations occurred with communities to determine anthropologically approved locations.

Once the initial six shelter sites were chosen the club swung into planning construction dates, recruiting volunteers and arranging travel, food and accommodation for the trips.

Eighteen months after the consultation process the first construction crew were 'on-site'. Holes for the nine (9) support posts are 'pegged-out' and then the dirt dug out. The metal structural components, with holes pre-drilled, are bolted together. These frames are then placed in the appropriate holes and temporally secured with adjustable struts. Roof beams and purlins are attached. The central gutter, with its gutter-guard attached, is installed. The tank base and water tank are positioned, overflow pipes connected and the tap fitted. The roof and side wall are fixed. Posts are then concreted in place with the aluminium table secured into a concrete 'footing'.

Volunteers remain 'on site' throughout the construction process, usually at a nearby bush camp. All food is prepared by one of the team and evenings are a time of relaxation while planning the following days schedule. Once the shelter is complete the site is cleaned; ready for the tanks to be filled with either rainwater or potable water.

During a recent unheralded and very heavy rain event a family travelling in their car, in a very remote western part of the APY Lands, on one of the longer stretches of dirt road, became bogged. Knowing the likelihood of help reaching them for some days was unlikely because of the weather conditions and the road being unusable, the family walked some 5 kilometres, to where they knew a recently constructed shelter was located. This family stayed at the shelter for three nights until help arrived. They had shelter, water and the table acted as a bed. Anecdotal reports indicate this shelter made a difference between life and death for these parents and their children.

The safe haven that each shelter, strategically placed adjacent to the roads that crisscross the APY Lands, will provide is reflected in the above event.

The Rotary Shelter Project is going a long way to making travel in the APY Lands safer. Recently two shelters were constructed at the junction of the Stuart Highway and the main road into the Lands near Indulkana.

Rotary Onkaparinga thank the following for there generous assistance with this ongoing project.

Magnus Australia, Polymaster Tanks, Coopers (Mt. Torrens), Innovation Engineering, Reece Plumbing Supplies (Mt, Barker), Paradise Mazda, Enterprise Car Rentals, Desert View Apartments (Coober Pedy), Regional Anangu Service Aboriginal Corporation, Nganampa Heath Council, SA Power Networks and the APY Lands Executive for placing there trust in Rotary to undertake this project.

Photos



A 2022 completed shelter adjacent to the Everard Ranges



Two recently constructed shelters on the Stuart Highway at the Indulkana Bus Stop.



Rotary volunteers on the way to cater for 3000 meals at the Kulilaya Festival, Umuwa, March 2024, make use of the Indulkana shelter.



The first of many to use the shelters at the Indulkana bus stop.