

Living the Four-Way Test

Immediate Past International President Bill Boyd headed an impressive line-up of speakers and forum facilitators at the first Living Ethics summit in Ballina, NSW, in April.

Bill officially opened the Summit and was keynote speaker to launch a process aimed to clearly deliver the concept and value of ethical practice to the local community and, by relating that process to the *Four Way Test*, to widely and relevantly promote the principles of Rotary.

“Ethics is something that we take for granted as Rotarians but we need to remember that we live in a world in which leaders constantly show that they place little value on integrity, honesty and ethical behaviour,” Bill said.

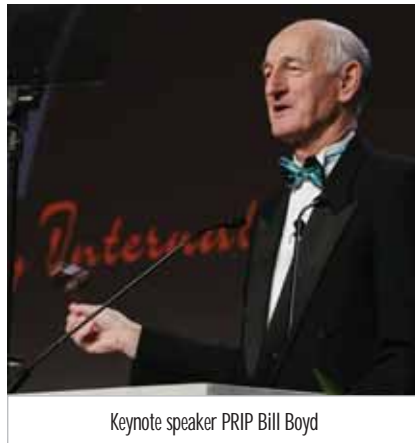
“I hope that the model established by Ballina will be picked up by other Rotary clubs, and that this will be only the first of many Ethics Summits.

“Rotary and our communities will be richer if we can repeat the Ballina experience and have others such as secondary school pupils and local business people join Rotarians to consider the standards that we want in our communities.” ■

Background

The idea for an ethics summit was sown when members of the Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond discussed experiences of unethical behaviour in the business community and how that behaviour had impacted on their own businesses. From those early discussions, several members of the club came together to look at the options for a response.

How could Rotary work for change in reducing what seemed to be a spiralling business and community problem? The spectre of unethical behaviour in local and state political representatives, council employees, business people and in the community was evident in many areas. Values such as those espoused by the Rotary’s *Four Way Test* were being eroded. The idea of a Living Ethics Summit that would explore Rotary’s *Four Way Test*, and discuss what it meant to be ethical in business, community and family, slowly began to take shape.



Keynote speaker PRIP Bill Boyd

The Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond teamed up with the Northern Rivers branch of NSW Business Chamber, a statewide organisation that represented a variety of businesses who could help plan such an event and formed a working committee with representatives of both organisations.

High quality local, national and international speakers were identified and arranged. Apart from PRIP Bill Boyd, these included Kevin MacDonald, CEO of the NSW Business Chamber as keynote speaker, Keith Garner, Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer of the Wesley Mission, Australia; Pauline Ross, Queensland Director of Nursing and Director of the Southern Cross Credit Union and Ian Martineau, Principal of Emmanuel Anglican College, Ballina, led forums on business, community and family ethics respectively. ■

The Summit

The Summit took place in Ballina on April 11, and the participants first enjoyed addresses from the keynote speakers before breaking into three Forums to consider issues around business, community and family ethical practices. Summit participants included local government representatives, business owners, students and community members.

In the business forum, Keith Garner explored the concept of gaining equity in business dealings by reconciling profit generation with the business’s social context. Participants considered several case studies

and gained an insight into how to carve out a set of values in business.

Pauline Ross tackled the question of achieving sensitive and sustainable community developments in the community forum. Participants were asked to consider ethical responsibilities by the integration of environmental and social balance when planning.

Ian Martineau provided a novel approach to the family ethics forum with four Year 11 students acting out family scenes around a kitchen table to show how family ethics and values have changed over generations.

“The attendance at the Summit by Rotarians and their contribution to the workshop discussions show Rotary to be a leader in addressing ethical issues and is ‘spreading the word’ on ethics,” said Lyndal Denny, President of the Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond, after a successful day. She said that all the participants and speakers had a genuine care about the future of society and were keen to have the chance to participate in a movement capable of generating real opportunities for change.

Members of the Rotary Club of Matamata, New Zealand, sister club of Ballina-on-Richmond, attended the Summit and in a letter, extended their support. Matamata club emphasised that, “We can never underestimate the strength of the Rotary *Four Way Test* – it stands for all times, as a great measure of mankind and of the business he/she conducts, so what a great way to advertise it to the general public via the format of the Summit”. ■

Where to from here?

Already there has been interest from a number of other Rotary clubs. Organisers are receiving evaluations and are already compiling suggestions for the future.

It will, no doubt, involve youth as it is clear they are the future of our society. Maybe, it will in some form become a key program of Rotary International.

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