

MEMBER'S BIO

MARGARET GRUMMITT

Born in New Zealand, Margaret grew up in Auckland and attended teachers' college where she studied Physical Education and Home Economics. While she was visiting family in Australia, she joined the Queensland Police Service and served in Brisbane and in northern country areas before moving to the Gold Coast over thirty years ago. While in the Police Service, Margaret spent some years in community policing, which included supervising Police Youth Clubs and Camp Bornhoffen, co-ordinating neighbourhood watch and prosecuting domestic violence cases. Seeing first hand child abuse and the abuse of women plus observing juvenile crime trends, she developed deep concern in these areas.

Margaret was a RYLA awardee after discovering the website and applying for a place. She returned later as a leader – and loved it. Further, she saw a computer advertisement for Group Study Exchange, applied, and after a series of interviews went as a member of the team to Chicago. Her involvement with the Police Youth Clubs brought her in touch with Ken Bannister who was then with Lifeline, and they shared a concern for the activities of young people during schoolies week. Through discussing this with Ken (her daughter was going to attend schoolies that year) she in turn talked it over with two MacDonalds managers, and we all know the ensuing story. A volunteer group was formed through Rotary which has gradually expanded to involve other volunteer groups on the Gold Coast, assisting the Police where needed.

Margaret joined Rotary when Bob Scott was president of Surfers Paradise Central, although she has had a period as a member of the Parkwood Rotary Club. She took leave of absence from the Police Service when she became a Councillor in 2000, but returned to policing in 2004 to the domestic violence unit. During this time, she spent four years in Court, prosecuting an average of 25 applications each day. In 2007 she became a Rotary GSE leader and led a team to Scotland where she had the opportunity to study community renewal in the Glasgow region. There, major social disruption has been turned around to create a safe urban environment using programmes which she feels could be used here. Margaret is Director of Youth at Rotary district level.

Rotary is the conscience of the community says Margaret, providing a forum which gives back, and creating an atmosphere of caring for each other which she feels provides a wonderful model for young people. She is extremely grateful to have been raised with the Christian foundation of "love thy neighbour" which is expressed in the work of Rotary where she values the opportunity to assist in making a difference to so many in the community.

Margaret and husband Noel have raised two daughters, Ghislaine and Annaliese who have fulfilled the opportunities given them to make their own mark. Ghislaine is working for Doctors Without Borders in Cambodia and has become fluent in the Kmer language but she expects to be reassigned soon to continue her duties elsewhere in Asia. Annaliese was a Rhodes Scholar, and after completing her Doctorate in Chemistry at Oxford, worked in research at Harvard University. There she met and married her husband who has a Ph.D in Mathematics, but now they are living in Sydney where Annaliese is studying for a medical degree. She is very interested in becoming involved in clinical research with tropical contagious diseases.

Rowing on the Nerang River provides Margaret with a very active hobby and she participates in veterans events where she has won many awards. Gardening is another hobby and she loves to spend time in her garden whenever possible. Her dog Polly is a constant companion, ranking second after her husband in that role! She believes that a house is not a home without a dog!

Back as a Councillor, and now having left the Police Service, Margaret is involved with the Committees for Community and Cultural Development, Economic Development and Tourism and Water Management. Still serving the community, but now in a different role, she is fulfilling her objective of "giving back", drawing on her wealth of diverse life's experiences to provide a very real role model for those young people in the community about whom she cares so deeply.