



Queensland Rotarians take care of unfinished business

By **Ted Latta**

Rotary Club of Ashgrove/The Gap, Qld

A team of project volunteers from Rotary Australia World Community Service visited the Solomon Islands Western Province in March to build a vocational school and run four-day workshops for local teachers.

The team, all from Queensland, included Leader Trevor Taylor, of the Rotary Club of Glasshouse Mountains, Cliff and Shirley Weder and first timers David and Desley Magee from the Rotary Club of Ashgrove/The Gap.

Cliff said the work was the result of a network of financial benefactors, donations, local authorities, and willing workers.

“Advance planning involved the Rotary Club of Gizo and Solomon Island authorities,” Cliff said.

“The Rotary Club of Ashgrove/The Gap contributed to the freight cost of a shipping container to Gizo, which contained wood working machinery valued at \$15,000 and paid for out of funds raised from the Solomon Islands tsunami appeal.

School classroom requisites were provided courtesy of the Mt St. Michaels College Interact Club (Ashgrove) and

students from Moreton Bay College (Wynnum).”

Trevor Taylor and Cliff “hitched” a boat to the container terminal at Noro to retrieve needed materials, while Shirley (a teacher/librarian) worked with library staff on the accession registers and other systems and conducted a four-day phonics live-in workshop for 30 teachers from seven schools at Ghatere village, as well as workshops at Gizo Community School.

Shirley said it was pleasing to see teachers and students enthusiastically embrace the phonics method for the improvement of literacy and reading skills.

Desley Magee worked with the librarians at the Gizo Community School to classify stock into the accession registers and setting up systems.

Materials used in these programs were donated by Bookmarketing Queensland.

Having secured materials and organised transport for the Karaka project (courtesy Capt. Cook), Trevor, Cliff and David spent two weeks living in a village, working in muddy mountainous terrain with delightful people on the construction of their vocational school building.

They then went to Ghatere village where additional plans were made to fast-track the completion of the vocational school building that began late last year.

Beyond the work carried out by the team, five computers from Computers4Kids, Brisbane, and paid for by Ashgrove/The Gap Rotary Partners, were presented to the Gizo Secondary School.

“School Principal, David Polosomana, who has expertise in IT quickly activated this new technology for the senior students,” Cliff said.

“Other materials distributed to village schools included Kits for Kids, books and school supplies, much of which was donated by the students at Moreton Bay College, Wynnum; and Interactors at Mount St Michaels, Ashgrove.

“Birthing kits, provided by Donations In Kind, Brisbane, were distributed to some village midwives; others were provided to Gizo Hospital for distribution by their boats to remote villages.

“By working in education infrastructure and vocational training, we were able to make a small difference in the lives of a group of young people who are future potential leaders of their nation,” Cliff said. ■