

The Maurice and Marlu Story



Sarah Brown of WDNWPT writes that this was the organisation's favourite photo of 2009. It is of Maurice Gibson being dialysed in the Dialysis Room at Kintore accompanied by Marlu his friendly joey! This must surely be the only dialysis centre in the world where the patient can be accompanied by a kangaroo!

Sarah says: "What you can't see is that Maurice Gibson has lost both his feet to gangrene! This doesn't stop him, or WDNWPT getting him back out to Kintore to spend time with his family and 'look after country'.

Maurice is unstoppable! His unbreakable spirit and his love of life inspire us all to work hard to keep him well and connected to the things that are important to him. When the *Purple House 2* at Kintore is complete we will have the capacity to dialyse more people for longer and Maurice can't wait!!"

Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (WDNWPT)

The origins of WDNWPT may be found in a partnership of interested persons and bodies with Sir William Deane and the late Charles Perkins as co-patrons. This in turn led to a high profile auction in Sydney, on 11 November 2000, of Aboriginal artworks that raised \$1 million to fund the development and subsequent activities of WDNWPT.

The auction itself was inspired by indigenous dissatisfaction with mainstream health services. In contrast to the situation nationally, no one in Central Australia had ever received community-based care for kidney failure. The situation then was that those affected by kidney failure would have to move permanently to Alice Springs, NT for treatment and end their days without being able to return to their community.

The significance of the resulting dislocation for Yanangu people, who experience very high rates of kidney failure, is it works against holding onto their very sense of identity and well being. Living '... in other peoples country, not speaking the language, separated from those who give them a reason to live would break the toughest spirit'.

The focus of WDNWPT has been '... to develop and deliver a system of more appropriate support services and treatment options for Yanangu on dialysis, and to establish processes enabling it to operate as an effective, honest community advocate'. A number of programs were developed, directed towards providing social support for those on dialysis in Alice Springs including brief return visits back to their communities; dialysis and training is now available at the *Purple House 1* at Alice Springs. Dialysis also commenced in 2004 in a dialysis room in Kintore, approx. 500 kms west of Alice Springs.

When refurbishment by Rotary of the *Purple House 2* at Kintore is complete the dialysis capacity at Kintore will increase to two units with space for a third. In addition there will be a health education facility directed particularly at assisting the community to achieve reduced kidney failure and in turn to avoid the need to move away.



Working together for the wellbeing and health of the people of the Western Desert

Rotary Club of Woden Inc.

News Bulletin No. 2

February 2010

This is the 2nd bulletin reporting progress on this project. The first can be accessed at <http://www.rotarnet.com.au/woden>

I express on behalf of our Rotary Club my deep appreciation for the generous support for our refurbishment of the *Purple House 2* at Kintore as a dialysis treatment and health education centre for the Western Desert community. Many Rotary Clubs, government and other organisations and individuals have supported us; they are listed in this bulletin. If anyone has been omitted please accept my apology and advise us, so that we can correct the list.

As can be seen from the Project Co-ordinator's report we still have a long way to go and our main problem is a shortage of funds. This will affect the completion date of the project. In this context please note that arrangements have been made for tax deductibility of financial contributions to the project. The details are indicated below.

I am delighted that three volunteer working parties are going to Kintore during April and May. I thank John Gray (Canberra City Rotary), John Widdup & George Calcar and Shukry Sahhar who will lead these.

As part of the further promotion of the project we are holding a promotion dinner in Canberra on Wednesday 12 May. Retired Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery, AC, AO(Mil), CVO, MC (Retd) has very generously agreed to speak at the dinner. Please pencil the date into your diary. Further details will be available shortly.

We are particularly grateful to the remote western desert indigenous community for inviting us to work with them on finding solutions to the serious problems arising from kidney failure in Central Australia. We are impressed with the commitment they have shown since 2001 to this issue and respect them greatly for their determination to succeed.

Ros Osbourne, President

Tax-deductible donations to the project

Cheques should be in favour of the *J. C. Olsson Relief Trust Fund (WDH Project)*

Mail to: Rotary Club of Woden, PO Box 637, Woden, ACT 2606.

A copy of News Bulletin No. 1 is available at: <http://www.rotarnet.com.au/woden>

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Progress Report - David Fox (Project Co-ordinator)

As you will see from Cliff Hicks' report opposite the electrical work is basically complete. We are extremely grateful to him and Geoff Hunt who have now made two long return vehicle trips to Kintore. Airconditioning will be finalised in May or June.

I thank the Canberra City Rotary for organising a volunteer working party from 8 to 18 April 2010 to fit internal doors, complete internal structural work and carry out fencing.

This will be followed by a volunteer plumbing working party for 2 weeks commencing 19 April led by plumber George Calear, his wife Lyn and John Widdup and four others. George made an exploratory assessment in January of the work to be done. A second plumbing working party will follow at a later date to be determined.

In May Shukry Sahhar will lead another volunteer working party that will install benches, cupboards, shelving and tiling.

The finishing-off of the building will include carpentry, floor covering, final internal painting, paving and other miscellaneous outdoor works.

Our goal is to complete the building in 2010 but this will depend on the availability of funds. Generous donations amounting to \$150,000 will ensure the achievement of that goal. WDNWPT will then be able to increase its dialysis capacity there.

Project Supporters

We are grateful for the assistance generously given to us by our many supporters including:

- * **CONTRIBUTIONS** – Australian Government Grants to Western Desert community
- * **CONTRIBUTION** – Australian Government Grant
- * **CONTRIBUTION** - Rotary Foundation Matching Grant with support of Rotary District 3650 (Korea)
- * **CONTRIBUTION** – Canberra Rotary, ACT
- * **CONTRIBUTION** – Woden Daybreak Rotary, ACT
- * **CONTRIBUTION** - Canberra City Rotary, ACT
- * **CONTRIBUTION** - Past Woden Rotary President Jon Cassell, ACT
- * **CONTRIBUTION** – Rotarian Angela Newman, Ger-ringong Sunrise Rotary
- * **CONTRIBUTION** – Dante Alighieri Italian Choir
- * **CONTRIBUTIONS** – Anonymous
- * **DRAWINGS & SPECIFICATIONS** - Suters Architects in association with Northrops Structural Engineers, Marline mechanical, services engineering, EDS Engineering Drafting Services, Frosts preparation of hardware schedules, Charles Martin Perspective drawings, all of Newcastle, NSW
- * **ELECTRICAL WIRING ON SITE** - Cliff Hicks & Geoff Hunt, ACT
- * **FRAMES & WHEEL CHAIRS** - Hall Rotary, ACT
- * **GENERAL SUPPORT** - Governor, Rotary District 9500
- * **GENERAL SUPPORT** - Rotary Club of Newcastle
- * **GENERAL SUPPORT** - Kintore Town Council, NT
- * **MATERIALS DISCOUNT** -Big "O", Alice Springs, NT
- * **PAVING MOULDS** -Wagga Rotary Clubs, NSW

Working Parties to date

These working parties have visited Alice Springs &/or Kintore to work on the project assisted by the people of Kintore.

1. **NOVEMBER 2007** – Rotarian from WODEN ROTARY: David Fox
2. **NOVEMBER 2008** – Rotarians & friends from WODEN ROTARY: Shukry Sahhar (Leader) Helen Sahhar, John & Julia Widdup, Neale Emanuel & Lucinda Lang.
3. **JUNE 2009** – Rotarians & friends from WODEN ROTARY: Shukry Sahhar (Leader), Helen Sahhar, Ros Osbourne, Lukas & Natalie Strohmayer, Bernadette Cappello, Neale Emanuel, Margaret Ellis, Cliff Hicks & Geoff Hunt.
4. **AUGUST 2009** – Rotarians & friends from WODEN ROTARY: John Widdup (Leader), Julia Widdup, Annemarie & Rod Driver, from SOUTH WAGGA WAGGA ROTARY: Eugene Maloney, Greg Bannon, Tony Christie, Mick Luckie, and from WAGGA WAGGA KOORINGAL ROTARY: Pop Power.
5. **OCTOBER 2009** – Cliff Hicks & Geoff Hunt, Electrical installation
6. **JANUARY 2010** – George Calear, plumbing assessment

The 5th Working Party - Cliff Hicks

Geoff Hunt and I departed Canberra in October 2009 for our second 6,000 km return vehicle trip to Kintore. On the way we spent a whole day in Alice Springs and had discussions with Sarah Brown of WDNWPT; she expressed her great appreciation for the work Rotary has done to date. She was at that time very busy with interviews for TV, radio and the press over the issue of non-availability of NT dialysis services to individuals living in WA but only 200 km from Kintore.

We have completed all the electrical work at the *Purple House 2*, with the exception of 4 power points. These have to await other services and fittings yet to be completed. All electrical work we completed has been tested and meets (and exceeds) specifications.

All communications are completed - 13

data/telephone points, plus 6 TV points. All tested and ok. I also provided extra power below the communications 'box' so that there is adequate power points there for the comms gear, DVDs, modulator boxes, etc which may be required there.

Prior to our departure from Kintore on November, we were hosted by Bev Hansen, the co-ordinator of the Aboriginal Women's Centre. The women greatly appreciate the work being done by Rotary and said so in their brief but meaningful message attached to a cake they had baked for the occasion. (see illustration).

On the way back we stayed with our new friends, the Hewitts, in Alice Springs. David has assured me he is happy to go out to Kintore to finish off the several power points that I was unable to complete this trip. I also did a radio interview on the project.



Purple House 2 at Kintore – Refurbishment Plan



When refurbished the building will have three functions:

- # **RIGHT SIDE** – treatment centre with up to three dialysis units & space for patient families;
- # **CENTRE** – a kidney health education unit and;
- # **LEFT SIDE** – an accommodation unit for visiting health staff and patients.