

**SPEECH BY
TUGGERANONG COMMUNITY
COUNCIL PRESIDENT,
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TO ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
CLUB TUGGERANONG
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Subjects: The TCC, volunteering and quiet achievers

Mr President, members, guests, thank you for inviting me to speak to you this evening.

This will be one of my last formal functions as president of the Tuggeranong Community Council.

It is a voluntary role which I have held for the past three years and comes to a close at the Council's Annual General Meeting in early September.

So, tonight, I wish to take the opportunity to talk to you about the Council and volunteering in our community.

But first, you have to understand how the Tuggeranong Community Council works.

The Tuggeranong Community Council is an incorporated, voluntary, not for profit, non political, community based association operating within the Tuggeranong District.

It is formally recognised as the peak community body in Tuggeranong representing the interests of the local residents and the communities within Tuggeranong Valley.

The Council receives partial funding from the ACT Government to cover administrative costs.

Despite its name, it is not a council in local government terms or sense.

But that does not stop me from regularly getting phone calls from people wanting, among other things, to register their dog or report a stray one, complain about faulty BBQs and dirty toilets in public parks and illegally parked or dumped vehicles.

I direct them to the ACT Government via Canberra Connect.

That number is 13-double-2 81 if anyone needs it.

I particularly like the phone calls from residents of Tuggerah Lakes on the NSW Central Coast.

They regularly complain to me that their garbage has not been collected.

So I direct them to Wyong Shire Council.

Again, if any one needs it, that number is; oh 2 4 3 5 oh – double 5, double 5.

As mentioned earlier, the Tuggeranong Community Council is not a local government.

Unlike most other Australian states and territories we only have one level of government in the ACT, the Legislative Assembly headed by a Chief Minister.

Over the border, you will find two levels of government, a state government headed by a Premier and local government, headed by a Lord Mayor, Mayor or Councillor.

With the advent of self government in the ACT a community council structure was adopted from Scotland to increase the level of community representation and participation in the processes of government in the ACT.

So the Tuggeranong Community Council was born in the early 1980's from what was a residents group based in Kambah.

There are several other community councils in Canberra, one at Woden Valley, Weston Creek, Belconnen, North Canberra, Inner South and in Gungahlin.

The community councils hold combined meetings on a regular basis to discuss a range of common issues.

ACT Government authorities and other bodies consult with the councils on issues affecting their respective communities.

These issues depend to a large extent on what is important to each community, however, authorities are expected to consult the community councils and the wider public on major planning and development issues as part of the application, consultation and approval processes.

As I said, the ACT community council structure was adopted from Scotland where there are 1200 community councils.

Unlike Tuggeranong, executive members of the Scottish community councils are elected by their communities.

They are also paid.

Executive members of the Tuggeranong Community Council are elected annually by financial members of the Council.

The next election will take place at the Council's Annual General Meeting on 4 September when my three year term as president comes to an end and a new one is elected.

It has been an interesting and rewarding three years during which time I have seen the council grow in membership and forge new links with many like minded community groups and organisations in Tuggeranong.

I believe it has also re-established itself as the peak community body representing the interests, views and aspirations of Tuggeranong residents.

One of the first tasks Council members and I undertook when I became president was to introduce a Code of Conduct for members and guests.

The next job was a review of the Council's Constitution.

Among amendments to the constitution was the introduction of a new rule that limited the term a person could sit as president to three years.

During my term the council has supported other resident and community groups in their various campaigns and raised their issues of concern before the members of the Legislative Assembly or during my regular meetings with the Chief Minister.

Members and guests also have an opportunity to voice their concerns directly to our local members of the Legislative Assembly or the Officer in Charge of Tuggeranong Police Station who regularly attend and report to our regular monthly meetings.

For example, one of the first issues the Council raised when I became president was the overwhelming opposition from Tuggeranong residents to build homes near the flight path of Canberra Airport.

In response, the Council conducted an online survey and the results of that survey and the comments that flowed from the community have been conveyed to the ACT, NSW and Federal Governments.

The Council has been heavily involved in the consultation processes for the Erindale and Tuggeranong Town centre master plans, the residential development planned for East Greenway and proposed developments for Hume including plans for a new Southern Cemetery.

More recently it has taken up the issue of the health of Lake Tuggeranong with a Clean Up campaign around the lake foreshores and joined forces with the Southern ACT Catchment Group to host a series of forums to raise community awareness and establish a Friends of Lake Tuggeranong Group.

It also supported a group of Chisholm residents in their campaign to stop the development of land which had become known and accepted as a neighbourhood park and raised the concerns of another group of Chisholm residents over plans for a multi level housing development.

Of course a council is nothing without its members.
Our members come from various backgrounds, usually arriving at a council meeting with one particular issue or concern.

After attending a few meetings they sign up and become an active full time member.

They represent all age groups and each one of them brings with them a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Council.

For example, we have a retired environmental officer and a few environmentalists, a planning inspector, an accountant, a lawyer, a social worker, a child care worker, a teacher, a youth and community worker, transport enthusiasts, an IT guru and many more people expert in their own fields.

Each one voluntarily contributes to the council in his or her own way.

And that is what I would now like to talk to you about, volunteering in our community.

I volunteered to join the Tuggeranong Community Council and take on the role of President because I wanted to give back some of the benefits and rewards I have enjoyed living in this community.

I also wanted to help make my community a better place in which to live.

I believe this is what also drives people like you and all the other volunteers I have met during my time on the council and my term as president.

I meet them in the street, at council meetings, at the Tuggeranong Community Centre, they come knocking on my door collecting for charity and I see them at the Hyperdome or slaving over a BBQ at Bunning's raising funds for various community projects and programs.

And then there are those that you don't see, those who work behind the scenes and that I describe as the quiet achievers.

These are the ones who go that extra mile and tend to be overlooked or that we forget to thank along the way.

And we really don't appreciate them or the work they did until they are gone.

This brings me to a personal story I want to share with you tonight about one special volunteer and someone I describe as a quiet achiever.

He was a humanitarian, a tireless worker in his community and one who never sought recognition or reward.

He was a leader and a volunteer to local service clubs, community organisations and emergency services groups in his home town.

He was known for always going out of his way to do more than was ever expected or asked of him, going that extra mile.

This man's volunteering began in 1969 when he became a leader with his local youth group to save it from disbanding, a position he held until a heart attack in 1980.

His wife also took on a role as a youth leader with a junior section

He also supported a girls youth group, of which his daughter was a member, by helping to establish a permanent campsite for them.

He helped to raise funds to build a new headquarters for his local youth group and to purchase new equipment.

Despite having long retired as leaders; he and his wife continued to support the group by fund raising and were regularly invited back to join in various celebrations.

He was again honoured when he was asked to participate in the investiture of a new generation of youth members to his old club that included among them, his grandson.

He also served his community through his local Lions Club.

He was instrumental in the development of a program that saw several hundred smoke detectors installed free of charge in the homes of the elderly.

He built a catering caravan and towed it to remote locations at all hours of the day and night to serve hot meals and beverages to emergency services personnel on rescue operations.

He helped establish a Lions rest park in his suburb and a museum to celebrate the long history of the coal mining industry.

In the lead up to Christmas he would be seen scaling shopfront awnings or up light poles decorating the main street with bunting and giant Santa's.

He and his wife were also familiar faces to the elderly residents of their community as they delivered meals on wheels and provided companionship for the many lonely and housebound.

He was well known and loved in his community.

He made the lives of many people brighter and better just by being himself and going that extra mile when asked to help.

Even into his 80's he was going from door to door in his neighbourhood assisting his elderly neighbours with odd handyman jobs.

He was also going head to head with his local council and developers to improve pedestrian access to the local bus stop for them.

On top of this, he was primary carer for his wife who by now had become housebound.

However, the extent of his community service was never fully recognised because, like many volunteers, he never boasted about his work.

This was because he was a quiet achiever who chose to work behind the scenes.

It was only after his passing in March, his wife was placed into nursing care and his family was cleaning up the house that his medals, certificates of appreciation and other awards were discovered.

They were found hidden atop a wardrobe.

His family never knew that many of these awards ever existed.

They were never hung on the walls of his house for all to see because this man was never one to trumpet his achievements.

His awards included;

- the Lions International Melvin Jones Fellowship for outstanding humanitarian and community work and presented to him by the International President of Lions, Giuseppe Grimaldi.
- life membership to the Lions Club NSW-ACT Public Health Care Foundation in appreciation of services to the community,
- 1998 James D Richardson Honour Award in recognition of dedicated service to the community and Lions International,
- 2003 James D Richardson Honour Award, this time in recognition of his long service to his Lions Club,
- the Lions Club President's Appreciation Award,
- long service award to the Scouting Association of Australia and a
- Scout Wood Badge and 1st Gilwell Park Scarf for Leadership.

I know there are many people in our community like this man who work behind the scenes and who are quiet achievers.

They labour away, sometimes doing more than what is expected of them and they sometimes miss out when the gongs are handed out and the accolades are shared round.

And, it's not until they are gone that we truly appreciate what they did and it's too late to say thank you.

So, on behalf of the Tuggeranong Community Council and Tuggeranong residents I want to say thank you to Rotary, other service clubs and the many volunteers for all the work you do in Tuggeranong.

I also want to give special thanks to all those quiet achievers among you.

Your work is valued and you are appreciated.

Finally, you might ask who was the quiet achiever I was referring to.....he was my father.

Thank you.

ENDS